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EIGHTEEN YEARS

ON

THE GOLD COAST

OF AFRICA,

INCLUDING AN ACCOUNT OF THE NATIVE TRIBES, AND THEIR INTERCOURSE WITH EUROPEANS.

38247

BY

BRODIE CRUICKSHANK,

MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, CAPE COAST CASTLE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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EIGHTEEN YEARS

ON

THE GOLD COAST.

CHAPTER I.

The African continent—Its appearance from the sea—Objects of interest on approaching the shore—Unhealthiness of the climate—Interest in the elevation of the people—Ill-success of the efforts hitherto made for this purpose—The failure not attributable to the absence of any improveable quality in the negro race—Necessity of avoiding wild and fanatical schemes, and of proceeding by progressive steps—Gold Coast prepared for the reception of civilizing influences—The great requisites necessary.

THE Gold Coast of Africa, extending from Asimee to the River Volta, presents a wide field for curious and varied speculation. Its sunny skies, but seldom disfigured by gloom or tempest;

its modulating sweep of hill and dale; its deep, impenetrable thickets; its magnificent forest trees, the ever-verdant freshness of its luxurious vegetation; the richness of its mineral wealth, still shrouded in the mysterious recesses of its mountains, or in the depths of its dark and muddy streams; its luscious friuts; the gorgeous plumage of its birds; and the endless variety of animal and insect life, which inhabit its wild jungle tracts; invest it with an indescribable charm of vague and wondering curiosity. As the stranger approaches it from the Atlantic, and obtains the first hazy and indistinct view of its distant outline, it appears covered with a misty pall, and presents such a dream-like picture to the imagination, that little effort is required to people its solitudes with beings of his own creation. On a nearer approach, it assumes a sombre monotonous aspect, which leaves upon the mind a disagreeable feeling of gloomy oppressiveness, strengthened by the reflection that we are viewing the haunts of savage life.

A dark impenetrable mystery seems to hang beneath the shade of those gloomy forests, fit abode for idolatry and cruel superstition. Where

could rapine, and man-stealing, and murder, be more securely pursued? Where the cries of affliction and despair so easily stifled? Where could the human mind find a scene more calculated to impress it with a superstitious awe, or to prepare it for the bloody rites of pagan worship?

Ideas such as these cannot but occur to one who views this coast for the first time, and who is acquainted with the dark page which it fills in history. But as he draws nearer to the shore, and the different features of the scene begin to stand out in distinct and prominent relief, he naturally recals his thoughts from the realms of fancy, to fix his attention upon the novel scene. It may be that the gentle sea-breeze, which blows with considerable regularity, has begun to fill the sails of his vessel, and it glides with a gurgling ripple through the tiny wavelets of the sea, glittering in the radiance of a blue and cloudless sky. He is struck with the picturesque appearance of a straggling fleet of fishing canoes steering for the shore, with their ragged sails of matting, and the naked fishermen, lolling listlessly in their frail barks, which appear but ill calculated to brave the perils of the deep. He hears the distant notes of their rude songs, or, more nearly, the wild jabber of an unintelligible tongue. He watches them as they

approach the beach, upon which the surf is breaking in continual rollers, through which the little skiffs dash fearlessly to land. He observes busy groups meeting them at the landing, and engaged in hauling up their canoes, their naked dingy figures flitting and glancing about, like motes in a sunbeam.

He allows his eye to follow the trend of the coast, and to mark its various bays and headlands. He sees the mighty ocean, over which he has sailed many a weary day, hemmed in by a rim of white glittering sand, which gives it the appearance of a stupendous mirror inlaid with silver, the dark foliage of the trees forming an appropriate background. More near, he can distinguish, in rapid succession, the mud walls and dingy roofs of straggling native villages, for the most part nestling amid groves of the graceful cocoa-nut-tree; while scattered farther inland he observes an occasional silk-cotton-tree stretching its giant bulk to the sky, like some huge sentinel to guard the land. As the vessel advances, the panorama is ever changing, but always marked with the same verdant tropical features, which have a wild Robinson Crusoe sort of charm for most Europeans, on their first arrival.

Anon he descries a white speck in the distance,

which, by aid of the telescope, he discovers to be Cape Coast Castle with the British ensign flying over its battlements. His voyage draws to a close, amidst a tumult of mingled feelings not very easy to describe. There is a lightness and elasticity in the clear transparent atmosphere, a laughing joyousness in the gentle ripple of the sea, an idea of wild romance about the untried land lying in beauty before him, and withal, the happy consciousness of having overcome the perils of the deep, which exhilarate the spirits, and excite a variety of agreeable sensations.

But in the midst of this gleam of delight, it is impossible at such a moment to exclude altogether the thought of the deadly nature of the climate. The bare idea of it presses like a dead weight upon the hearts of loving friends and relations, who mourn him as one gone to the grave. He has been told how treacherous it is; that it smiles but to deceive, and that there is sickness, and fever, and death, in its balmiest gales. And so these gloomy images cast their dark shadows over the sunny landscape, but only to remind him that he is in the hands of a kind Providence who will do what seemeth Him good; while hope, kindling at his resignation, soars upon the wings of time, and returns him to

his native land after a long career of honour and usefulness.

It was with some such feelings, and under such circumstances, that the writer approached and landed at Cape Coast Castle in 1834. Since then, he has had opportunities of making himself acquainted with the Gold Coast, and its people, which have fallen to the lot of few; and it is his intention to give some account of them to the public, in the hope of drawing attention to these interesting tribes, and of exciting new and persevering exertions to elevate their moral and social condition. Deeply impressed with the idea of their capability for improvement, from long observation of the gradual development of their powers, and grieved at the state of debasement to which they have been so long consigned, he trusts that this appeal will not be made in vain. And if it shall appear, from the description about to be given, that there is abundant room for the philanthropist to build his hopes of their elevation as a race, he cannot allow himself to believe that Christian England will refrain from the noble attempt to cultivate and improve them.

It is the mission of civilized nations to carry the banner of civilization into barbarous and

heathen lands. This boon has hitherto followed in the train of conquest and subjection, and has been forced upon nations, not from any motives of benevolence, but from the natural superiority of civilization over barbarism, which must triumph when they are brought into constant and immediate contact. The climate of Africa precludes the idea of conquest, and continuous possession by Europeans, even were the amalgamation of races possible. We cannot therefore found any hopes of civilizing Africa upon such a distant and doubtful contingency. Neither, if it were desirable, is there any probability of the extinction of the negro race, like other native races, which have disappeared from the face of the earth upon the advent of the European. The strong physical qualities of the African will, as far as we can judge, always preserve him from this fate. There remains, therefore, only one way of civilizing Africa, and making a conquest of her—a conquest far nobler than the warrior's sword has yet accomplished, a conquest born of love and Christian charity. It is not too much to hope that England will take the lead in this righteous crusade.

Notwithstanding the great pecuniary sacrifices, and the devoted exertions which Great Britain and some of her sons have made of late years in

behalf of Africa, there has been no permanent beneficial result, at all commensurate with the magnitude of the schemes which have been pursued for her advancement. This failure has operated in a very prejudicial manner for the African, and has been attributed to his innate depravity, upon which it has appeared almost an impossibility to graft a single good and enduring principle.

Does not the very mention of the Niger Expedition sound on the ears of many benevolent Christians as an alarm against any farther attempt to civilize these people? Do not the lives and money expended on that most disastrous and fruitless enterprise serve as finger-posts to warn the nations of Europe from the impracticable task? Could it be that a project, based upon the purest and most benevolent motives, committed to the charge of able, gallant, and zealous officers, assisted by all appliances of art and science, and sanctified by a nation's prayers, should fail of success, were it not that the native character of the African presented obstacles which it were in vain to seek to overcome? The prevalence of ideas such as these, and a consequent growing indifference about Africa, appear to be the only results of that famous expedition.

But, with all becoming deference be it said, we must look for the cause of its failure, not in the

absence of any improveable quality in the negro race, but in the inadequate nature of its schooling. It was the offspring of fanaticism, which ever overlooks or miscalculates the means to an end, and sees the accomplishment of its dreams through the exaggerated medium of an over-heated imagination, which reposes its trust upon miraculous interpositions and special providences. The corrupt tendencies of human nature, and the effect of ages of degradation and debasement upon a race, would appear to have had little weight in the calculations of the projectors of the scheme. Precept and example were considered sufficient to eradicate evil and substitute good among whole tribes of people, without the help of correction and restraint, and this, too, before the lessons of experience could show the effect of such teaching upon their self-interest. It is scarcely doubtful whether posterity will not class this enterprize with that of Peter the Hermit, as equally the result of a noble but mistaken zeal.

But peace to the ashes of the gallant hearts who died in such a cause! They have not perished in vain! Actuated by the most generous motives which could influence human conduct, and utterly regardless of self-sacrifice, they have left in their enterprize and in their fate a

lasting memorial of disinterested philanthropy and Christian benevolence. Nor is this all. The world has become wiser by this new experience, and recognises the necessity of acting upon human probabilities.

But let not our errors and miscalculations operate prejudicially to the African, and prevent us from pursuing the same noble object by other and more feasible means. The strongholds of barbarism are not to be carried by any sudden and violent *coup de main*. The outposts must be approached with caution, and a secure intrenchment obtained within the enemy's lines before any attempt is made at subjection. Allies must be purchased over to our side, bound to us by ties of self-interest. Our attacks must, even then, be insidiously made, and our ultimate object carefully concealed. Every advantage gained in this manner will render the next step more easy, until one by one prejudices have been removed, customs and practices discouraged or abolished, and a friendly spirit favourable to our purposes fully awakened.

Upon the Gold Coast these important and preliminary objects have been secured, and little is now required for the more perfect development of an incipient civilization. With a strong government, possessed of moral and physical power,

capable of repressing any sudden outbreak, an efficient judicial system suited to the state of social progress, the establishment of schools, and the employment of a moderate amount of capital in the country, the work of improvement may be safely left to time. Let England but confer these blessings, and nothing more is wanted for a steady and progressive advancement. A protectorate guaranteeing these essential elements of civil and social prosperity would have the rare merit of raising this long degraded race into the ranks of civilization.

CHAPTER II.

Meagreness of our accounts respecting the Gold Coast—Early Portuguese discoveries—The Pope's grant—Trade of the Coast farmed by Fernando Gomez—Establishment of the settlement of Elmina—Importance given to African settlements by the discovery of America—Encroachment of the Dutch—Expulsion of the Portuguese from Elmina in 1637—African trade carried on by English merchants in the reign of Edward VI.—The Company of Royal Adventurers of England trading to Africa formed in 1662—Capture of Cape Coast Castle from the Dutch—Description of Cape Coast Castle—The town and environs—English, Dutch, and Danish settlements—Eager pursuit of the Slave Trade—Nature of European tenure on the Gold Coast—Demoralizing effects of the Slave Trade—Low state of morality among the Europeans—No advantages conferred by us during the whole course of the Slave Trade.

WE have very little authentic information on the subject of the inhabitants of the Gold Coast

of a very ancient date. The discoveries of the early Portuguese navigators did not enrich history with many facts respecting the people of these countries, beyond the mere knowledge of their existence in a state of rude and savage nature, and, notwithstanding the number of years which have elapsed since that time, we are still but meagrely supplied with descriptions of the state of society in these regions.

Africa may not inaptly be compared to an extensive deer-forest, where the lordly proprietor betakes himself at times in quest of game and recreation. He has certain beats, which he frequents, where the deer have their tracks, and to which his beaters drive them. Here he takes his stand, and watches for his prey, while the deep recesses of the forest remain to him a perfect *terra incognita*. In the same way the nations of Europe have planted their establishments upon this coast, upon those lines which communicate most freely with the interior, and have waited the approach of their prey with as feverish an excitement, while little thought has been given to the country beyond.

In the early part of the fifteenth century, the

Portuguese, guided by the enlightened curiosity and zeal for discovery of Prince Henry, the son of John I., entered upon a career of maritime adventure which has rendered the name of their nation famous in history. The exploration of the African coast was the object of his grand ambition. As early as 1412 he sent out a vessel for this purpose; and though this first expedition was not attended with any distinguished success, it increased the Prince's ardour for discovery. Before 1418 they had traced the line of the African coast beyond Cape Non, until within sight of Cape Bojador, which at first appeared an insurmountable barrier. In that year two gentlemen of Prince Henry's household, John Gonzales Zarco and Tristram vaz Texeria, set out with the intention of rounding this cape, but being driven to sea in a gale, they reached an island which they named Porto Santo, and soon afterwards discovered Madeira, upon which there is reason to believe that an Englishman of the name of Macham had been accidentally cast in 1334.

The Canary Islands had previously been discovered by some Spaniards of Seville during the reign of Henry III. of Castile, at the close of the

fourteenth century. The King conferred the sovereignty of the island upon a Norman baron, John de Bretancourt, whose successors afterwards sold it to Prince Henry. In 1433 Gilianez rounded Cape Bojador, which had been previously doubled by some Norman adventurers, who are said to have traced the African coast as far south as Sierra Leone. Prince Henry, anxious to secure to the crown of Portugal the advantages which he foresaw must arise from these new discoveries, obtained from Pope Martin V. a grant assigning to Portugal all lands or islands which had been or might be discovered between Bojador and the East Indies. The spirit of the age led the sovereigns of Europe to respect this grant for a time, and secured to Portugal the exclusive right of trading to this coast. Some Englishmen in the reign of Edward IV. were stopped in their preparations for an African voyage by the King, upon a representation being made to him of the Pope's grant in favour of the crown of Portugal.

In 1441 Antonio Gonzales and Nuno Tristan examined the coast as far as Sierra Leone, beyond which it does not appear that the Portuguese had penetrated at the death of the Prince in 1463.

During the reign of Alphonzo in 1469, Fernando Gomez farmed the trade of the coast of Guinea for a rent of five hundred ducats, obliging himself to extend the discovery of the coast five hundred leagues during the period of his exclusive privilege. It is probably owing to this monopoly that we have no detailed accounts of progressive discovery from the time of Prince Henry's death until the accession of John II. to the throne in 1481, during which period the whole coast of Guinea, with the Bights of Benin and Biafra, had been visited.

King John, alive to the advantages of the African trade, determined still further to secure and protect it, by forming establishments on the coast; and with this view he sent out an expedition under the command of Don Diego d'Azambuja, at the commencement of his reign. It consisted of a squadron of ten caravels and two transports, with five hundred soldiers and two hundred labourers. They landed at Elmina upon the Gold Coast, which had been selected for this purpose, and they were prepared to carry out their intentions of building a fortification by force, if the native King should seek to oppose them. The debarkation was effected with

a great deal of ceremonious pomp. The Portuguese marched to the native village, unfurled the royal banner of Portugal upon a high tree, placed an altar under its shade, celebrated mass and offered up prayers for the speedy conversion of the natives and the prosperity of the church about to be erected.

The natives, accustomed to see the Portuguese arrive upon their coast in the simple guise of traders, were not prepared for this display of power, which they perceived with great distrust. The King, Camaianca, objected to the establishment of a permanent settlement, and does not seem to have yielded anything like a cordial assent when they commenced building their fortification. Overawed, however, by the superiority of the Europeans, he did not resort to any forcible opposition, until the Portuguese labourers began to quarry a rock, which the natives held sacred. Then they had recourse to arms. Several of the workmen were wounded, and Azambuja, who appears to have acted with great discretion, had much difficulty in appeasing them, which he preferred to do by means of presents and excuses rather than resort to force, rightly judging that

their future intercourse would be rendered more agreeable by such forbearance.

It is very evident, however, that this, the first European settlement on the Coast of Guinea, was established in opposition to the wishes of the natives. The fort, which was built with great expedition, received the name of St. George; and Azambuja, after a government of two years and a half, returned to Portugal. Other settlements were formed at different points of the coast and forts built. But it was not until Columbus had given a new world to Spain that the great importance of these African settlements was fully acknowledged. While the native American race was fast disappearing under the cruel yoke of their Spanish taskmasters, the superior physical qualities of the African race marked them out as admirably suited to replace the extraordinary depopulation which was going on. Under these circumstances Portugal was not allowed to enjoy her African possessions unmolested. The Pope's grant was no safeguard against cupidity. The Dutch, at that time famous for their maritime power, were tempted to make encroachments upon the Portuguese rights, and commenced that career of hostility against

them, which ended in driving them out successively from most of their colonial settlements. They established themselves at Mouree, only twelve miles from the chief settlement of the Portuguese at Elmina, from which they succeeded in expelling them in 1637, and with the fall of Elmina the power of the Portuguese on the Gold Coast became extinct, the minor forts yielding, as a matter of course.

Nor did the English remain idle spectators of these events. Impelled by a similar spirit of adventure, and as eagerly alive to motives of self-interest as their Dutch contemporaries, they early turned their attention to the advantage of a trade with Africa. In the latter part of the reign of Edward VI. our merchants commenced a trade with the coast of Guinea, but without any support from government. They were therefore ill able to contend against the Portuguese, who endeavoured to maintain their exclusive right to the trade, upon the strength of the Pope's grant. Nor had these early adventurers less to contend against after the Dutch had altogether expelled the Portuguese from the coast in 1637. But the spirit of adventure which the discovery of new regions had roused,

inspired them with an energy and perseverance not easily daunted, and the prospect of gain made them insensible to the risks attending the prosecution of their trade. They received some encouragement from James I., whose favour invested their enterprize with a higher degree of consideration.

It was not, however, until 1662 that a chartered company was formed, under the patronage of the Duke of York, for the purpose of prosecuting the African trade in a systematic manner. Before this time our countrymen had established a fort at Cormantine, with some minor factories on other parts of the coast. These now became the property of "The Company of Royal Adventurers of England trading to Africa." Soon after the formation of this company, a war broke out with Holland, which was a death-blow to its prosperity, for at its close in 1667 "The Royal Adventurers" were left with only one fort, that of Cape Coast Castle, which had been taken from the Dutch. Cormantine and its dependent factories fell into the hands of our rivals, having been obliged to succumb to the famous De Ruyter, after a severe struggle, in which he lost many hands, the natives having turned out to the assistance of the small

garrison, and fought with remarkable bravery. In this wretched position of their affairs, the company, exhausted by the expenses of the war, surrendered their charter to the crown.

In 1672 a new company was incorporated, under the name of "The Royal African Company of England." They applied themselves to place their establishments on the coast in a position to cope with the Dutch Company. The strongest rivalry still continued to animate these two nations in this part of the world. It would be tedious, and little to the purpose, to trace all their petty strifes and encounters, even if we had reliable data to guide us in our investigations. But distorted as the facts are, according to the self-interested views of the narrators, no advantage can be gained from tracing all the ramifications of a tortuous and unscrupulous policy. Suffice it to say, that this company succeeded in building forts at Dixcone Secondee, Commendah, Anamaboe, Winnebah, and Accra, in addition to the Castle at Cape Coast, which they greatly enlarged, and constituted their head-quarters.

In 1750 they were divested of their charter by an Act of Parliament, and their establishments were

transferred to a new company, "The African Company of Merchants." During the administration of this company, we still find a continuation of the same incessant hostility with the Dutch. Nor was this confined to contentions between the two companies upon the coast alone. The distance from Europe of these settlements, and their apparent insignificance, did not protect them from the attacks of ships of war. But the Dutch had the worst in this strife. In 1782, Captain Shirley in the 'Leander,' who had been repulsed in an attack which he had made upon Elmina, succeeded in taking the forts of Mouree, Cormantine, Appam and Berracoe, while President Mills, assisted by fifty men from H.M.S. 'Argo,' took Commendah during the same year. These forts were given back to the Dutch in 1785, who restored at the same time to the English their fort at Secondee, which had been taken. Since then, each of these governments has continued to occupy their respective posts upon this line of coast, which we shall here enumerate.

Cape Coast Castle, the chief establishment of the English, was built by the Portuguese, who lost it to the Dutch, who in like manner were

deprived of it by the English. Many additions have been made to the original structure, according to the growing necessities of our position there. At present, it is a large, irregular building, ill-suited for the purposes of defence, but containing within its precincts good and commodious apartments for the governor and officers, as well as a variety of barrack-rooms and warehouses of a very indifferent description. It is calculated to mount from fifty to sixty pieces of ordnance, and there is about that amount of nearly unserviceable cannon at present on its battlements. It is placed upon the margin of the sea, and protected from its raging surf by an immense rock, against which the heavy rollers beat with an incessant roar, casting their angry spray over the adjoining bastions.

On its north side is the town of Cape Coast, composed partly of the houses of the Europeans, and partly of the natives, the latter huddled together in the most crowded manner, and without the slightest regard to light, or air, or the convenience of approach. As circumstances permitted, by the falling of the houses into decay, or from an accidental fire, the English governors have endeavoured to establish something like regularity here, by opening up a few good streets. In this manner, a large clear space has been formed opposite the

principal entrance of the castle, which serves as a parade-ground for the troops. From this esplanade a broad street fronting the gate, and lined on each side by rows of umbrella trees, runs from south to north, dividing the town into two nearly equal parts. There is a gentle and continuous rise from the castle gate to the top of this street, which is crowned by a very sober-looking chapel belonging to the Wesleyans, perfectly devoid of any architectural decoration, but strongly and substantially built.

The bulk of the European houses is on the west side of the main street. Their clean, whitewashed walls, with their green jalousies, lying irregularly along the brow and side of a gently swelling acclivity, and interspersed with the mud walls and dingy roofs of the native houses, have a pleasing and picturesque effect, when viewed from the sea. On the east side of the same street the native houses cluster all the way down an easy slope, straggle through a rugged, rocky hollow, and scramble irregularly up the side of a little hill, which there shuts in the town. Its north side is surmounted by another little round eminence springing abruptly out of the valley, and rising to a height of two hundred feet. A martello-tower, mounting twelve guns, built

upon this rising ground, perfectly commands the town and castle lying at its base, and affords a most extensive view of the line of coast. On another small eminence, to the west of the town, the Wesleyan establishment of house and schools, almost concealed from view among the trees, forms a beautiful and interesting feature in the scene, while the picture seems appropriately filled up by Fort Victoria, another small tower on the north-west, and farther inland. The south is bounded by the castle and the sea.

Such is Cape Coast. It contains, perhaps, some six thousand inhabitants; but hemmed in as it is by its crescent of little hills, with the thick bush close upon its outskirts, it presents few traces of cultivation in its immediate vicinity. Neither is it very well supplied with agreeable walks or other places of recreation. As the sun begins to decline, the Europeans may be seen strolling along through the avenue of trees upon almost the only road in the country, leading to a salt pond, or small lake of salt water, distant about a quarter of a mile from the town, on its western side. Here they resort for a gulp of the cooling breeze of the evening. Some throw themselves at length on the green sward on its margin, and gossip over the events of the day, happy if a

late arrival from England has furnished them with some subject of interest respecting their native land. Others of a more active turn, the possessors of little yachting canoes of all variety of rig, cheat themselves into a belief that they are enjoying the pleasures of a regatta, and contend with eagerness in their different sailing matches; and sooth to say, there is charm enough in such a scene to beguile an hour or two of a monotonous existence.

But to return from this digression, which perhaps is not altogether out of place, as it is desirable that the reader should have in his mind some idea of the locality of the principal settlement of the British on the Gold Coast, from which it is believed that the blessings of civilization are destined to be diffused, and to which there will be occasion to make so often reference in this work. In addition to Cape Coast Castle, we have also very good forts at Dixcove, Anamaboe, and Accra, which are all that remain in repair out of the numerous stations which we occupied during the time of the slave trade. Those already named, with Appolonia, Secondee, Commendah, Tantum, Winnebah, and Pram Pram, make up the list of British settlements: and these, and the territories and villages belonging to them, are still considered under British protection. The Dutch, in

like manner, had forts at Elmina, Commendah, Secondee, Chamah, Boutrie, Axim, Mouree, Cormantine, Appam, Berracoe, and Accra; of which Axim, Boutrie, Chamah, Elmina, Appam, and Accra continue still to be occupied. But these two nations, who have retained their possessions until this time, did not enjoy alone a partition of the Gold Coast. The Danes also had forts at Accra, Ningo, Quittah and Addah, besides the fort Fredericksberg within a mile of Cape Coast. The French had a fort at Amokoe, in the Fantee country, and the Brandenburgh Company another at Taccorary in Ahanta. A reference to the map will show how thickly studded this line of coast must have been with bristling fortifications, and how eager must have been the traffic in slaves, for which purpose they had been erected. With our present ideas upon this subject, there is something exceedingly horrible in the contemplation of the nations of Europe thus clinging to Africa like leeches and sucking her very life-blood, and to find her now almost neglected and forsaken when she is no longer permitted to be their prey. Until we shall see the same eager rivalry to heal, as there was to inflict the wounds, we can never believe that Christianity has effected its mission among the nations.

From this cursory glance, the slight changes which took place in the different forts, arising from attacks from without, may be seen. Without pretending to give anything like a connected account of the progress of events during the many years of our possession until the abolition of the slave trade, we may nevertheless manage to convey to the reader such a general impression of the nature of our intercourse with the people, and its results, as may greatly assist him in forming a just estimate of our debasing influence upon them.

A ground rent, paid to the chiefs and head men of the several towns where forts were built, seems to have been the general nature of European tenure on the Gold Coast. With this payment was coupled the necessity of giving monthly pay-notes to the principal men of these towns, in consideration of which, a species of service such as a vassal paid to his superior, was understood to be given.

The native, keenly alive to his interests, supple and fawning, readily acknowledged the superiority of the white man in words, and hailed him, without any scruples of pride, as his master. But he had, and ever has had, a reservation in his own mind which limits the signification of the term to his own construction of it, and has no more

intention of giving implicit obedience, if he can help himself, when his pleasure and profit appear to him to be compromised, than if he had never entered into any undertaking upon the subject. Neither would he wish to shake himself free from the necessity of obedience. His object is to endeavour, on all occasions, to magnify the sacrifice which he is making to gratify your wishes, not so much from a determination not to obey them, as to obtain some bribe or concession for his obedience.

A service of this description, appears to have been the nature of the dependence of the African upon the European on the Gold Coast from their earliest intercourse. It has certainly given rise to an incessant struggle, productive of every species of artifice on both sides, in the attempts of the one party to extend their power and influence, and of the other to obtain new privileges. The relation in which they stood to each other never, in fact, appears to have been clearly defined or understood. Indeed, it is possible neither party wished it to be so, as any certainty upon the point would lessen the probability of advantages which might possibly turn up in the chapter of accidents.

Our only object in the erection of so many forts

was to have the means of protecting ourselves in the prosecution of the slave trade. We did not aim at any territorial jurisdiction, or attempt to assume any direction in the affairs of the country, beyond the exercise of a certain kind of mediatorial influence, with the view of preventing any interruptions to the trade, arising out of the squabbles of the different tribes.

The governor's jurisdiction extended only over the officers and slaves of the company, and his power was often insufficient to protect the interests committed to his charge against the intrigues and rapacity of the native authorities, who were constantly managing to involve the servants of the government, or the government itself, in litigious and vexatious *palavers*. No sooner had one troublesome dispute been arranged by the payment of rum and goods, either as a bribe or as a fine, than some new source of quarrel was ingeniously discovered.

It might be supposed, that the higher degree of civilization of the European, and the advantages attending it, would naturally have enabled him to assert his superiority over the ignorant native. But to effect this, its legitimate conquest, it is necessary, we fear, that the civilized man should, by his conduct, either directly or indirectly, be

advancing the well-being of the barbarian in the development of his moral nature.

Nothing of this kind characterized our intercourse with the natives of the Gold Coast during the whole time of the continuance of the slave trade. It was one long, dark career of unfeeling selfishness, without a single aspiration for the improvement of the natives. Our motives were perfectly understood by them, and placed us at once on an equality of footing with them. Equally participators in a nefarious traffic, they had this advantage over us—that the supply of the marketable commodity was in their hands; and being less affected by commercial interruptions and delays, they made a profit of throwing temporary obstructions in our way, which they knew would be removed by bribery and concessions, feeling assured that our cupidity would induce us to bear with their extortions and to swallow their affronts.

There is something very humiliating in the perusal of the records of those times, which are still to be found in Cape Coast Castle. They leave generally upon the mind the impression of the paralysed weakness of guilt on the part of the European, and of triumphant roguery on the part of the native.

Nominally masters, we yet exercised no authority, or only such as the natives did not care to dispute. They willingly made us a present of their submission and deference in words, but belied their expressions by their acts. They allowed us to instal, and sometimes to depose, their kings and head men, in the one case for the sake of the presents given upon the occasion, and in the other, because the individuals might have rendered themselves as obnoxious to them as to us.

As far back as 1754, we find the governor and council placing a King of Fetu upon the throne, and celebrating the event by a royal salute; and much about the same time, we are told of the natives preventing the company's slaves from cutting fire-wood in the forests, upon the plea that no rent had been paid to them for the use of the wood, which they considered it to be one of their perquisites to provide.

At times, we come upon some traces of greater energy on the part of the governor, and find him cannonading his townspeople. Again we see him shut up in his castle, and not allowed to visit a neighbouring settlement. A fight of three days' duration took place between the fort and the

people of Anamaboe, arising out of the determination of the commandant to prevent their committing a nuisance under the walls of the fort. Many lives were lost, but the nuisance continued. Pay-notes were sometimes stopped, and other coercive measures had recourse to, as a punishment; but eventually the natives triumphed.

So exorbitant had their exactions become, that in 1780, an attempt was made by the president and council to cut off some of their perquisites, such as "Christmas presents, chiefs' customs, ground rent and water custom, Sunday's and Wednesday's liquor, and presents to cabboceers;" but it was found impracticable.

Some idea of their very turbulent disposition in those days may be formed from these slight specimens of their conduct; but much of this perversity among the natives was no doubt owing to the very low standard of morality among the Europeans, the natural result of the demoralizing nature of the trade. They were, in general, ill qualified to gain respect. Scenes of low debauchery were of very frequent occurrence, and the time of the governor and council appears to have been principally occupied in attempting to keep them in order. Many of their letters and state-

ments provoke a smile, from the unblushing details which they give, and from the perfect unconsciousness which they manifest of right moral principle. Others, again, are amusing from their ignorant attempts at fine writing.

A worthy commandant of Commendah, complaining of the inefficiency of his garrison, says: "They are all sick, not from any acute distemperary disorders, but from old chronicle ones."

Another gentleman at Winnebah has curious ideas respecting the submission of the natives. Writing to the governor respecting an affront which he had received from one of them, he says: "I seized a musket, and made a rush at him; but the villain had the audacity to elude the bayonet!"

Their ideas of justice and redress must also have been of an extraordinary character, when we find the Governor of Whydah, so late as 1806, giving as his reason for taking from a schooner in the Roads, goods to a large amount, that "the vessel was from the Island of St. Thomas, and a man at Prince's Island owed him a debt."

Nor were their means of affording protection of a kind calculated to give us a very exalted idea either of their power or of a disinterested humanity.

The following memorandum is to be found in the Council Book of May, 1802:

"A free family from Great Cormantine, consisting of two males and nine females, having claimed the company's protection, saying they were free people without any man to defend them, in consequence of which they had been exposed to many vexatious *palavers* and that several of their relatives had already been *panyarred** and sold, the council having taken the case into consideration, ordered them to be incorporated with the company's slaves.

(Signed) "ARCHIBALD DALZIEL,
"JACOB MOULD,
"HENRY HAMILTON."

But valueless as this boon may appear to us, seeing that it involved their loss of freedom, yet

* The words *palaver* and *panyar*, corrupted from the Portuguese, are in very frequent use upon the Gold Coast. The former has a very extensive signification, meaning a quarrel, a litigious prosecution, a riot, or simply an amusing incident. The latter is used to express the forcible seizure of a person or property, to obtain redress or restitution.

is it an instance of more vigour on the part of the governor than we have yet seen, inasmuch as it exposed him to retaliatory measures from the people of Cormantine, which, however, they appear not to have ventured to take.

From this time generally may be traced the assertion of a more determined spirit, to break through the trammels of native chicanery and imposition. Hitherto, the jurisdiction of the Europeans only extended over their own servants. Prosecutions against others had to be made before the native tribunals; and it was in these corrupt courts that the European had to look for redress, which was seldom obtained without the payment of money as a fee or bribe to the judges, and never when the redress sought aimed at the curtailment of iniquitous practices touching the interest of the native aristocracy.

In 1803, however, the Governor of Cape Coast, at the instigation of Mr. John Swanzy, ventured to imprison one of the head men of the town for passing bad gold. This was a case where it would have been in vain to look for redress from the native court, as it trenched upon a valuable privilege of the principal men —that of cheating the white man, whom they had been in the habit of considering fair game.

They could not see this right infringed without a struggle, and they had recourse to arms. A serious riot took place. It was necessary to defend the castle from the attacks of the infuriated people, and a fire was opened upon the town, which resulted in the destruction of many of the native houses.

Again we find the council following up this blow in 1805. Eighteen canoemen of Accra, who had stolen powder of the value of one hundred pounds from the commandant, were brought to trial at Cape Coast Castle, and punished in a manner which shows that the Europeans had taken a lesson from the African in his manner of administering justice. The sentence of the court was, that as many of them should immediately be sold as would pay the loss, with sixty pounds additional for expenses.

Here we have instances of a more vigorous vindication of our power, marked, it is true, by the peculiar character of the times and country, but still carrying with it a wholesome lesson to the natives. Our influence, however, was seldom exerted, and almost powerless when exerted in favour of persons not employed in the service of the company. These had to undergo the full

rigour of native vengeance when they came under the lash of their displeasure, without any hope of protection from the white man.

Even in the punishment of offences committed by our own servants, a degree of harshness and indifference about human suffering but too often characterised our conduct.

In 1805, a slave woman belonging to the company was sold off the Coast, because she had contracted a debt of four pounds, "in order," says the council, "to deter the company's slaves from contracting debts." In short, it may be safely affirmed that, from our first settlement on the Coast until the abolition of the slave trade in 1807, we did not confer one single lasting benefit upon the people, and but few isolated advantages on individuals. No attempt had been made to educate them, none to repress their cruel and barbarous practices. If we except the successful inoculation, by Mr. Adams, of two thousand seven hundred and sixty natives in 1796, for which he received the thanks of the council, and an occasional attempt to prevent a human sacrifice, the promptings of humanity would seem never to have visited the hearts of the Europeans on the Gold Coast during this long

series of years. But if our benefits were few, who shall estimate the magnitude of the curse which we inflicted upon them? Our guilty and avaricious policy unchained all the worst passions of the human heart, giving loose to the most unbridled depravity, until the very image of humanity appeared to be effaced, and nothing remained but the savage havoc of wild beasts and infuriated demons.

CHAPTER III.

Geographical description of the country—Origin of the Fantees—Similarity of language among a variety of tribes—Traditions of former greatness — Classification into twelve tribes—The progress of the Ashantee power —Sai-Tootoo — His conquests and death — Apokoo — Aquassie — Battle near the Volta — Defeat of the Ashantees — Sai-Cudjoe mounts the throne—Is considered a great captain—First notice of the Ashantees in the records of Cape Coast Castle during this reign—Sai-Quamino—His deposition—First direct intercourse with the Kings of Ashantee—Review of the rise and progress of the Ashantee power.

WITH the commencement of the nineteenth century, and the abolition of the slave trade, we come upon times which introduce us to a better knowledge of the country, and to events which gradually involved us in the political strifes of the natives.

Before adverting to these, a short geographical

description is necessary for a clearer comprehension of the relative position of the different tribes which took part in these contentions, with such casual notice of their previous history as may seem necessary to gratify a moderate curiosity on this point.

The kingdom of Amanahëa is bounded on the west by the river Assinee, and stretches along the Coast as far as the river Ancobre. The whole of its western boundary is bathed by magnificent lakes, formed from the waters of several small rivers flowing from the interior, and from the heavy torrents which descend from the mountains during the periodical rains. The countries of Aöwin and Sawee are on its north side, Wassaw, Tufel, and Denkera to the north-east, with the river Tando, which flows through Ashantee, winding its long stream through them in a south-easterly course, and falling into the lakes near Appolonia, and thence into the sea.

In this kingdom of Amanahëa we had a fort, for which we paid a ground rent to the King of Appolonia. Upon the Ancobre, the French, at one time, had a settlement. They were expelled by the Dutch, who had an establishment about twenty miles up the river. It was destroyed by the officer in command, who was at variance with

the natives, and who revenged himself upon them by inveigling them into his fort, and blowing it, and them, and himself into the air by exploding his magazine.

To the eastward of the Ancobre is the territory of Axim and the Ahanta country. The Dutch have here a fort about two miles from the Ancobre. Proceeding eastward we come to the ruins of Hollandia, belonging to the Brandenburgh Company, thence to Acquada, a Dutch settlement and then to Dixcove, another settlement of the English. Three miles farther on, we reach Fort Orange at Boutric, formerly belonging to the Brandenburgh Company, but now to the Dutch. Near this is Boossooah, the capital of Ahanta, which is an extensive district lying between Axim and Secondee, where both the Dutch and English had forts. The Wassaw country runs along the whole of the northern boundary of Ahanta, coming down to the sea at Secondee. Proceeding eastward we come to Chama, near which the river Prah, which traverses part of Wassaw and Assin, falls into the sea. Here the Dutch have their Fort Sebastian. Nine miles from this station we come to Commendah, where the Dutch and English again had forts in close proximity. The native name of this place is Akataykie, and

may be considered as the extreme point of Eastern Wassaw. From Commendah it is ten miles to Elmina, the head-quarters of the Dutch settlements on the coast. A little farther on in the same direction we come to Cape Coast Castle in the district of Fetu, or Affetoo, a town about ten miles inland, formerly the chief seat of native authority in this part. Next succeeds Mouree, a Dutch settlement; then Anamaboe, where there is an English fort.

Between Cape Coast and Anamaboe, Fantee properly begins. Behind the line of coast on this part, are the extensive countries of Abrah and Assin. Eastward from Anamaboe three miles are the town and fort of Cormantine, built by the English about the middle of the seventeenth century, and taken from them by the Dutch. Not far from this the French had their settlement at Amokoe, near the small river Amissah. Northward is Mankassim, the capital of the Braffoe district of Fantee, with the districts of Edjimakow and Essacoomah lying to the north-east. We next reach Tantumquerry, where the English had a fort. This is situated in Accoomfee, a principal district of Fantee. About seven miles farther eastward is Appam, with the Goomwah district behind it. The Dutch have a fort at Appam. A few

miles farther on we arrive at Simpah or Winnebah, where the English had a fort. It is in the Agoonah country, which extends to Insabah and Akim in a north and north-east direction. The next station of consequence is Berracoe, where the Dutch had a fort. From Berracoe to Accra the distance is about twenty-five miles. Here the English, Dutch, and Danes had settlements. From this point, the country becomes more level, and maintains the same character near the sea all the way to the Volta.

Along this line of coast were the following settlements:—the Danes at Christiansburgh and Labaddy, the Dutch at Temma and Ponnee, the English at Pram Pram, and the Danes at Ningo and Addah. Farther on is the country of Agoonah. Kreepee and Aquamboo, Krobo and Aquapim, and part of Akim are the inland districts. From Assinee to the Volta the distance is three hundred miles. It embraces the different settlements which we have just cursorily noticed, and, with the inland districts already named, forms the Gold Coast. Coomassie, the capital of the Ashantee country, is situated inland from Cape Coast about one hundred and eighty miles in a due north direction. From this distant city, the kings of that country have, at one time or other, within the last hundred years, exercised dominion over, and received tribute

from, all these countries, besides others extending inland to Kong.

It would be idle to speculate on the early history of these different tribes of people, concerning whom we have no written account. Even tradition has left us but few data on which to found any theories of their origin. It is generally believed among the natives themselves, that their ancestors were driven from the interior of the country to the coast by the pressure of more powerful tribes, and that the Ashantees were originally the same people as the Fantees. Their tradition is that, being at war with Akim, they endured the greatest distress from hunger, and, in consequence, broke up their encampment to go in search of food. The Ashantees found nourishment from a plant or shrub which they knew by the name of shan, and hence got the name of Shan didi, or the eaters of shan; while the Fantees were supported by a tree which they called fan, and hence took the name of Fan didi, the eaters of fan. The pronunciation of the imperative of the verb didi, to eat, may, perhaps, be best expressed by the letters dti, which, added to Shan and Fan, would give Shandti, Fandti, a close approximation to the national names. This appears by no means an unlikely derivation; but it is subject to doubt from the

ignorance among the present generation of the plants referred to. The *a* which Europeans affix to the word Ashantee is not heard in the native pronunciation. Judging from language, it is very clear that the people of Wassaw, Tufel, Denkera, Fantee, Assin, Akim, Aquapim and Ashantee, all speak dialects of the same language, which would favour the belief that they are sprung from the same source, and are only different branches of the same family.

This great variety of names is not more singular than our own distinctions of Kent, Essex, Somerset &c., and the difference of dialect is not greater than we find among the English counties. In Appolonia, we have a distinct tongue, without many points of resemblance to the Fantee, but assimilating with that spoken by the natives of Assinee and Grand Bassam. In Ahanta, also, there is a different language; another at Winnebah and the Agoonah country; another at Accra; and another, the Adampé, in the country near the Volta. Thus, within a short space of coast, we have six distinct languages, without any marked resemblance or affinities.

We are of opinion that these may possibly be the remaining vestiges of an earlier race of inhabitants which have partly disappeared, and partly been amal-

gamated, with the tribes of Ashantee extraction. The Fantee has been gaining ground fast of late years, and is generally understood throughout the whole of the Gold Coast. The natives assert that many more languages were spoken formerly within the same space, and that they have given way before the levelling influence of a closer intercommunion. They speak also of the great power of the different states of Amanahéa, Wassaw, Fetu, Fantee, Agoonah, Assin, Akim, &c., before the Ashantees destroyed their independence, and have traditions of great wars, carried on with immense slaughter among each other. We are inclined to think that these have been greatly exaggerated by the halo with which time invests distant events.

There is another strange peculiarity, which would indicate the common origin of these tribes. A tradition exists, that the whole of these people were originally comprehended in twelve families or tribes, viz: The Aquonna, Abrotoo, Abbradi, Essona, Annona, Yoko, Nitchwa, Abadie, Appiadie, Tchweedam, Agoona, and Domina. It is very difficult to get any satisfactory explanation of the meaning of this distinction; but doubtless these generic terms arose from some distinctive employments or occupations. Nations do not necessarily belong to one or other of these families.

Individuals still class themselves as belonging to them, regardless of national distinction.

Bowdich says: "I have taken some pains to acquire the etymology of these words, but with imperfect success; it requires much labour and pains both to make a native comprehend, and to be comprehended by him. Quonna is a buffalo, an animal forbidden to be eaten by that family. Abrotoo signifies a corn-stalk, and Abbradi a plantain. Annona is a parrot, but it is also said to be characteristic of forbearance and patience. Esso is a bush-cat, forbidden food to that family. Yoko is the red earth, used to paint the lower parts of houses in the interior. Nitchwa is a dog much relished by native epicures, and therefore a serious privation. Appiadie signifies a servant race. Etchwee is a panther, frequently eaten in the interior, and therefore not unnecessarily forbidden. Agoona signifies a place where palm-oil is collected. These are all the etymologies in which the natives agree; and regarding these families as primeval institutions, I leave the subject to the conjectures of others, merely submitting that the four patriarchal families the Buffalo, the Bush-cat, the Panther, and the Dog appear to record the first race of men belonging to hunting; the Dog family probably first training

that animal to assist in the chase. The introduction of planting and agriculture seems marked in the age of their immediate descendants, the Corn-stalk, and Plantain branches. The origin and improvement of architecture in the Red earth; and of commerce probably in the Palm-oil: indeed, the natives have included the Portuguese, the first foreign traders they knew in that family, alleging that their long and more intimate intercourse with the blacks, has made the present race a mixture of the African and Portuguese. The Servant race reminds us of the curse of Canaan. This resembles a Jewish institution, but the people of Accra alone practise circumcision, and they speak a language, as will be shown, radically distinct, yet not to be assimilated to the Inta, to which nation they are referred by the Fantees, because it is the nearest which practises circumcision."

Such is the ingenious conjecture which Bowdich forms upon this peculiarity; but he seems to forget that palm-oil was not an article of trade during the time of the Portuguese, and that it could not therefore have been selected on that account as their distinctive family appellation. But from whatever cause these distinctions arose, they remain in full force to this day. A feeling of attachment to each other exists between individuals belonging

to these families, even although of different nations, and we have known instances of inheritances claimed, and obtained upon the plea of this relationship, to the prejudice of a blood relation, where there has been no male to come to the succession. If then, we take into account the prevalence of the Fantee language among so many different tribes, with this peculiarity of family distinctions, we cannot err much in referring them all to the same origin.

After the separation between the Ashantees and Fantees, referred to in the tradition which we have given, one party retired to the forests of Fantee, while the other marched off in the direction of what is now the Ashantee country. These latter made an irruption into the interior, from which their traditions taught them to believe they had originally been driven. The Ashantee power had been struggling for pre-eminence for some centuries and began to make its superiority felt about the beginning of last century. Their first king, of whom we have any mention, is Sai Tootoo, who made Coomassie the capital of his dominions. He was ably supported by his cousin Boatinnee, chief of Dwabin, of nearly equal authority with himself.

These potentates appear to have acted in concert,

and with great policy, and in a wonderfully short time made of themselves a great and powerful nation. They conquered several inland tribes, besides the Intas, from whom they had taken the country. Sai Tootoo also subjected Tufel and made it tributary. He conquered Denkera, notwithstanding that its king was assisted by Europeans from Elmina with some cannons, which were captured and carried as trophies to Coomassie.

Other advantages attached to this conquest. The Dutch Government paid the King of Denkera a monthly note for Elmina Castle, which became the perquisite of the victor, and to this day the kings of Ashantee enjoy the same. He also subjected the Assins and Akims, but was cut off in his career of conquest by the latter, who took him by surprise upon the occasion of one of his inroads, and cut him and his party to pieces, at a place named Cormantee, a catastrophe still present in the minds of the Ashantees, and rendered famous by their awful oath of "*Meminda Cormantee*," Cormantee Saturday. His brother and successor, Apokoo, made Gaman and Dagwamba tributary. He also completed the conquest of Akim, and obtained from it the pay-notes, which it seems Akim at this time held for the English, Dutch and Danish forts at Accra and to leeward. These

notes had been originally held by the chiefs of Accra, who lost them to the Akims in the following manner.

Accra, or as the natives pronounce it, Incran, signifies ants, a name supposed to indicate the great numbers of the people. These were hard pressed by their enemies the Aquamboos, and sought the alliance of the Akims, who treacherously contrived to make them tributary to themselves, after they had relieved them from the Aquamboos. One of the tokens of this superiority was the possession of the notes, which it has been seen at last fell into the hands of the Ashantees.

During this reign a conspiracy was formed against the king, who had attempted to abridge the power of his nobles. He was forced to fly from his capital; but having rallied around him a numerous body of adherents, he vanquished the rebels in a battle fought at Ahkiah and re-established his authority.

Apokoo was succeeded by his brother Aquassi, who seems to have had difficulty in preserving the subjection of the conquered states, without making any new conquest. The chiefs of Bourromy, Quatin, and Akim allied themselves with the King of Dahomey, with the view of throwing off the Ashantee yoke. A great battle was fought near

the Volta, which terminated in favour of the Ashantees: but the king was not content with the mere subjection of his revolted tributaries. He determined on crossing the Volta to punish the King of Dahomey for his hostility. He met with a great defeat, and escaped with difficulty. He died in 1752. The reigns of these three brothers appear to have extended over fifty years, and bring us down to the middle of last century.

After Aquassi, Sai Cudjoe mounted the throne. This king had much difficulty in repressing a revolt in Gaman. Twice was he defeated with great slaughter; and obliged to lead back his forces to Coomassie. But having consulted his deities, their favourable auguries induced him to make a third attempt, in which he succeeded. At the same time he received the submission of the Sarem states. He confirmed the subjection of the Wassaws and Assins, and compelled them to pay tribute to him. He also conquered Aquamboo and Aquapim, and was altogether considered a very great captain.

It is during the reign of this king that we have the first notice made of the Ashantees in the records of Cape Coast Castle. On the 10th of July, 1765, the council took into consideration the state of the country. It is represented that the Fantees and

Ashantees in conjunction having destroyed the Akim nation, had commenced hostilities with each other. The council were alarmed lest the Fantees should overcome the Ashantees, which they considered would be injurious to trade. They had also fears that if the Ashantees conquered, the settlements would be endangered. They determined to observe a strict neutrality in concert with the Dutch governor.

Again, in 1767, we find the same cause of alarm. The attitude of the Fantees and the Ashantees was still hostile; and it is stated that the Dutch at this time were instigating the latter to conquer the country. The council resolved to fortify themselves more strongly, and applied to the committee for ships of war to remain on the station while this state of affairs lasted. In 1772, we again find the council anxious about an Ashantee invasion, and resolving to give all the assistance they could to the Fantees, but without leaving their forts, or taking any active part in the struggle. The trade appears to have been greatly interrupted during the whole time of the reign of Sai Cudjoe, who continually kept the Fantees in a state of alarm by his attacks.

In 1780 presents arrived from England for Botty, King of Cape Coast, Ammooney-Coomah, King of Anamaboe, and the King of Ashantee.

It was believed that the governor might, by means of these, be enabled to open negotiations for the peace of the country, and free intercourse with the interior, which had been long stopped. Ammooney-Coomah of Anamaboe agreed to use his influence with the Fantee chiefs and others lying between Cape Coast and the Prah, and to obtain for the messengers intended to be sent to Coomassie a safe conduct. It does not appear that any result followed this attempt. But this king was not allowed to die in the triumphant subjection of his turbulent tributaries. Assin, Akim, and Aquapim revolted in the latter years of his reign, cut off the heads of his messengers, and successfully resisted his authority. He was making preparations to repress this revolt when he was overtaken by death at a very advanced age.

The next king was Sai Quamina, the grandson of the former. He made a vow that he would not enter his palace, nor see his wives, until he had obtained the heads of the revolted chiefs. He sustained several reverses; but at last his general, Quashie Quofee, succeeded in obtaining the heads of Akombrah and the Akim chief, Ofoosoo, through the treachery of their followers. With these trophies of the submission of the Akims, he returned to Coomassie. He also extended his conquests inland and invaded

Banda. Odrasce, the king, opposed him for awhile; but perceiving the hopeless nature of the struggle, he killed himself, having first given orders to his people to cut his head from the trunk, and to sew it up in a woman's belly, lest it should fall into the hands of the enemy. Notwithstanding this strange precautionary measure, his head was discovered, and was placed beside others on the Ashantee drums. Soota was also subjected, and Coranza became tributary after a struggle of ten years, carried on principally by Gaman auxiliaries. The Danish governor applied to this king for an auxiliary force to assist in punishing the Popos. The troops were granted, and were on their march to the Coast, when the governor beginning to get alarmed at the idea of such dangerous allies, bought their return to their own country with two hundred and fifty ounces of gold-dust. Sai Quamina, however, was not allowed to end his days upon the throne. Infatuated by the charms of the King of Dwabin's daughter, Gyawa, he neglected state affairs, and persisted in remaining at Dwabin against the remonstrances of his mother and the chief captains. These formed a conspiracy against him, and raised his brother Apokoo to the throne.

Another and more probable account attributes

his deposition to his favour for the Moors in his country, at whose suggestion he was attempting to make innovations on the immemorial customs of Ashantee. In this reign we again find mention of the Ashantees in the records of Cape Coast Castle.

In 1785 they were in the Aöwin country behind Appollonia, causing great alarm in that district, and in 1792 the governor and council sent messengers to Coomassiê with the view of prevailing upon the king to forego his intention of marching against "the leeward posts." This probably has reference to the difficulties in which the Danish governor found himself involved. The mission was not attended with success. The Ashantees were making preparations for war upon a large scale. This is the first account, which we have found of any direct intercourse between the governor and the King of Ashantee.

The deposed king retired to a village, with a few of his wives and slaves, and soon afterwards died. His brother, who had usurped the throne, had to contend against another revolt of his Gaman tributaries assisted by the entire force of Kong. The ostensible cause of this revolt was the restoration of the deposed monarch. They crossed the Tando, defeated the king, and pursued the

Ashantees to the forest, which surrounds the capitol. The king rallied the forces of his kingdom, and once more sought his enemies in the open plain. The conflict raged for some days, and ended in the entire defeat of his enemies. He returned to Coomassie with much spoil, and died soon after, having reigned only two years. He was succeeded by a younger brother, Sai Tootoo Quamina, who commenced his reign at the close of the last century.

It is astonishing to mark the rise and progress of this bold and ambitious nation. One hundred years had only elapsed since their greatest king, Sai Tootoo, made Coomassie the capital, but in that short space of time they had extended their conquests over numerous states. Nor was their ambition content with conquest alone. The enterprise of the warrior was nobly seconded by the policy of the statesman. Wise regulations were adopted, for the purpose of maintaining them in a state of subjection. The measures which were had recourse to, were not such as would be suitable to states advanced to any high degree of civil polity, or even for the social advancement of barbarous states; but they were well adapted to control a rude and lawless people, tenacious of their own peculiar customs. They had for their

sole object the maintenance of Ashantee superiority, without any attempt to assimilate the conquered tribes with them, which they well knew would have met with strong opposition, and rendered necessary the continual presence of such a military force as must have greatly interfered with their career of conquest. The native rulers continued to exercise their wonted authority, and were only burdened with the payment of a tribute, which in many cases was but a cheap requital for the superior protection which they enjoyed. It was not much different from the black mail, which the Highland chieftain imposed upon the defenceless Lowlander.

The management of these districts was confided to the king's chief captains, who each had his own particular department to attend to. These resided in Coomassie, and employed secondary agents to watch the conduct of the tributaries. To check the spirit of revolt, which the absence of any adequate physical force would naturally encourage, there was an annual general muster of these at the capitol, which had a tendency to inspire them with high ideas of the king's power, from the ostentatious displays which he was then in the habit of making. Advantage was also taken of this opportunity to arrange differences, to encourage obedience, to punish dis-

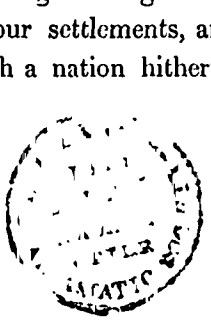
affection, and sometimes to remove an obnoxious opponent.

This simple expedient, combined with the severity of punishment, which never failed to be employed against those who attempted to resist the king's authority, had a powerful repressive effect. Nor was the king at all times greatly displeased with isolated outbreaks. Indeed, the insolence of his agents was sometimes shrewdly calculated for the purpose of bringing about this result, in order to afford opportunities for imposing fines, which still further weakened his adversaries, at the same time that it increased his own riches. By thus plundering conquered states, an immense amount of treasure in gold had been amassed by the kings of Ashantee. But there was deep policy in the sequence of their conquests, as well as vigour and ability in their prosecution. Their power gradually extended in a northerly direction, until they had subdued all the neighbouring states on that side, and obtained for themselves an extensive base for future operations, care being taken in the meantime to keep on friendly terms with the coast tribes, from whom they received their warlike supplies.

Inta, Dagwumba, Gaman, Coranza, Banda and other states first felt the power of the conquerors.

Gradually they expanded to the west and east, closing in towards the sea in the form of a crescent, until by the subjection of Denkera, Tufel, Assin, Wassaw, Sawee, and Aöwin on the one side, and Akim, Aquapim and Aquamboo on the other, they made an elliptic span from Assinee to the Volta, leaving only the narrow sea-bord, comprising Appollonia, Ahanta, Fetu, Fantee, Agoonah and the country about Accraun, unsubdued.

Such was the extensive dominion to which Sai Tootoo Quamina saw himself raised at the commencement of the present century. Notwithstanding an occasional revolt of one or other of his tributaries, which only served to give employment to his warlike subjects, his power must be considered at this time as very securely established, not one of the conquered states having ever successfully attempted to throw off the yoke. He must have looked with ambitious eyes at the narrow strip which interposed between him and the sea, and longed for some opportunity of adding it to his territories. This was not long wanting. It brought him into contact with our settlements, and made the world acquainted with a nation hitherto little known in history.



CHAPTER IV.

Assin divided into two principalities—Robbery of a grave by one of the chiefs — Interference of the King of Ashantee—Amoo's detention and escape—War between Cheboo and Apoutay—Treacherous conduct of Apoutay —Defeat of Amoo—Murder of the King's messengers — Flight of Cheeboo — Ashantees attack Cheboo and Apoutay—Treachery of Accom, Chief of Essacoomah— Invasion of Fantee — Capture of the Dutch Fort of Cormantine by Appia Danquah—Attack on the Town and Fort of Anamaboe—Distressing scene presented to the eyes of the garrison—Relief sent from head-quarters — Impression produced on Colonel Torrane by the deportment of the King and his Captains—Shameful appropriation of the prisoners—Influence of the Europeans.

FANTEE is bounded on the north by the country of the Assins, at this time tributaries to the King of Ashantee. Their country was divided into two equal principalities, the one under the sway of

Cheboo and Apoutay, co-partners in authority, and the other under a chief named Amoo. Upon the occasion of the death of one of Amoo's captains, a man of considerable wealth, much gold and valuable cloths were deposited with the body in the grave. One of Apoutay's people being present, became acquainted with this fact, and his cupidity led him to open the grave, and to remove the treasure. Amoo demanded satisfaction from Cheboo and Apoutay for this act of their follower, as well as restitution of the stolen treasure; but not receiving any redress, he laid his complaint before the King of Ashantee, the liege lord of both parties. They were summoned to appear at Coomassie, to have this affair adjusted.

Cheboo excused himself on the plea of his infirmities, but Apoutay repaired to the capitol to confront his accuser. Decree was given in favour of Amoo, and Apoutay was detained at Coomassie until restitution should be made. But managing to escape, he set the king's decree at defiance. Upon this, Amoo took the matter into his own hands, and waged war with Apoutay. Hostilities, however, were suspended at the instigation of the king, who prevailed upon them to endeavour to settle their differences at an interview. Both parties met for this purpose, but Apoutay was

acting a treacherous part. He concerted with Cheboo an attack upon Amoo and his followers during the conference. An armed party was sent for this purpose. They fell upon Amoo's people, who stoutly defended themselves, and succeeded in routing Apoutay's supporters, and in killing the man who had robbed the grave.

The King of Ashantee again interfered. He sent a present of a gold manilla to each, desiring them to suspend hostilities until such time as a fair adjustment could be made. Amoo obeyed, but Apoutay again attacked him, and drove him from his town. Upon this, Amoo obtained aid from the king, and in his turn defeated Apoutay. Another attempt was made by the king to effect a composition of their differences. He sent his messengers to Amoo, with two gold-headed swords and a gold axe, and requested him to remain quiet, while he endeavoured to prevail upon Cheboo and Apoutay to return to their town, and to settle the palaver.

Amoo again obeyed the king's command, but was suddenly attacked in the night by Cheboo and Apoutay, and totally vanquished. They killed every one who fell in their way, not even sparing the King of Ashantee's messengers. The Ashantee swords and axe formed a part of their spoil. War

with Ashantee was the consequence. Cheboo and Apoutay fled into the Fantee country with their followers. The king followed, sending a message before him to Accom, the chief of Essacoomah, with a present of twenty ounces of gold, to represent the necessity of his entering his country, and assuring him, at the same time, and desiring him to assure all the Fantees, of his peaceable disposition towards them, his sole object being the seizure of his two revolted chiefs Cheboo and Apoutay.

Accom returned for answer to the king's captain, Appia Danguah, that he had communicated his message to the Fantees, who had determined not to interfere in the matter. Appia Danguah was then at Buinka, where Cheboo and Apoutay gave him battle, but were defeated. The Ashantees were again attacked, the day after this defeat, by a large body of Fantees, whom the revolted Assins had bribed over to their side, and were again victorious. Many prisoners were taken, and among others Attah, chief of Abrah. The Fantees of Abrah wished to redeem their chief, and the king did not appear averse to comply with their request, provided they would deliver up the swords and axe which he understood had been given to them,

with other large bribes, as the price of their support of the Assins.

In the meantime, he sent Attah to Accom, the chief of Essacoomah, to be kept a prisoner. Accom betrayed this trust, and allowed Attah to escape. At this stage of the proceedings, Apoutay expressed his willingness to accept the king's mediation, if he would discharge his debts. The king appeared to be satisfied with this message, and sent gold manillas and handsome cloths to Cheboo and Apoutay, as an earnest of his readiness to be appeased. Apoutay, however, had been only seeking to gain time by his overtures of peace. He beheaded the king's messengers, and renewed his defiance.

This outrage greatly enraged the king, and he vowed that he would be now satisfied with nothing less than the heads of Cheboo and Apoutay. But before following in pursuit of them, it was necessary to make some arrangement to keep open the communication in his rear, and to obtain supplies of provisions for his army. For this purpose, he entered into an agreement with Accom, the Essacoomah chief, whom he had found it politic to forgive for his treachery in conniving at Attah's escape. He undertook to sell provisions to the

Ashantee army, provided they came to his town without their arms. This was agreed to, and the Ashantees, from time to time, as their necessities required, repaired to Essacoomah for fresh supplies.

Upon one occasion, however, Accom took advantage of the defenceless state of the Ashantees. He fell upon a body of nearly a thousand of them, who had come to carry provisions to the Ashantee camp, and killed many of them, and seized and sold the remainder. This treacherous act necessarily involved Accom in the war. The king marched against him, defeated him, and laid waste his country.

After this, he continued his march in the direction of the coast, whither the Assin chiefs had fled. On his way he destroyed every town where they had found sanctuary, and gained several victories over the Fantees, who attempted to oppose his progress. The Assin gold, however, had irresistible charms for the Fantees, who continued their support to Cheboo and Apoutay. The Braffoes supported them with all their might, but Mankassim, their capital, soon yielded to the power of the invaders, and was levelled with the ground, its wretched inhabitants undergoing the utmost severity of the king.

At length a division of his army appeared upon

the coast at Cormantine. The people were driven from the town, and the Dutch officer in command of the fort yielded it without a struggle to Appia Danguah, who established himself there, while his master, Sai Tootoo Quamina was encamped at Abrah, about fourteen miles from Anamaboe. Colonel Torrane, at this time governor, now began to get alarmed about the fate of the settlements, and felt anxious to mediate between the Fantees and the king. He desired to send messengers to his camp at Abrah, but the Anamaboes, confident in their strength, and zealous in the cause of the Assins, refused to allow any communication.

Mr. White, the commandant of Anamaboe, had also endeavoured to open a correspondence with the general at Cormantine, but his overtures of mediation were met with haughty insolence. He sent messengers to learn from Appia Danguah the king's motives for coming to the coast, and on the following day three men from Appia Danguah's camp came to the fort, with a white flag displayed. They did not condescend to make any proposals of a nature likely to lead to a peaceful result. Indeed, their motive seems to have been to spy into the state of preparation of the fort and people of Anamaboe. It being rumoured that there was an intention on the part of the Anamaboes to murder

them on their way returning to Cormantine, Mr. White escorted them beyond danger. He had informed them that he would give every protection in his power to the people of Anamaboe, in the event of an attack being made upon them by the Ashantees.

Soon after this visit, Appiah Danguah pushed forward a part of his division and occupied Agah, a small village not more than half a mile from Anamaboe. On the 14th of June, 1807, the Anamaboes marched out from their town for the purpose of dislodging them, which they effected after a sharp contest. In the meantime, however, it appeared that these feints of the Ashantees were intended to withdraw the attention of the Anamaboes from the king's movements, who approached close to the town from the side of Abrah during this skirmish, and on the morning of the 15th commenced a vigorous attack upon the Anamaboes, who had gone out to repulse him. These soon gave way on all sides, and fled to their canoes for protection. Mr. White, at the commencement of the attack, had opened the gates of the fort for the protection of as many women, and children, and old people as could crowd into it, and it was soon crammed with fugitives. Many others sought shelter under the outer walls, be-

lieving themselves secure from their pursuers, who, it was thought, would not venture to approach so closely, while some two or three hundred perched themselves upon a ledge of rocks in the sea, behind the fort, about forty yards from the shore.

But nothing seemed capable of daunting the daring bravery of the Ashantees. They advanced up to the very walls of the fort, amidst showers of grape which the little garrison kept pouring upon them, and made the most determined attempts to break in the gate. But it was nobly defended. Its entire force consisted of Mr. White, the commandant, with Mr. H. Meredith, Mr. F. L. Swanzy, Mr. Barnes, and Mr. T. A. Smith, officers, and twenty-four men, including some artificers and servants. These kept up a constant fire upon the Ashantees, from the great guns, until the commandant and several of the men were placed, by their wounds, *hors de combat*, and the defenders were reduced to eight. Such was the accuracy of the Ashantee fire, that they picked off or wounded every person who presented himself at the embrasures, and reduced the garrison to depend solely upon the musket, it being found impracticable longer to work the guns. Their gallant spirit, however, was nothing daunted. The Ashantees fell in great numbers before their deadly

aim, but still pressed forward with renewed vigour. Several attempts were made to set fire to the gate without success, although they did not retire from the attack until night, when, despairing of overcoming the obstinate resistance of the Europeans, they withdrew to the king's camp, and gave the garrison an unhoped-for respite. Some idea may be formed of the arduous nature of the defence from the fact of Mr. Meredith and Mr. Swanzy alone having fired nearly three hundred rounds of ball-cartridge after the fire of the great guns had ceased.

Next morning, the sad ravages of war presented to the eyes of the little garrison of Anamaboe a scene of the most painful nature. The fort itself was filled with the cries and lamentations of the women and children who had found refuge there, but were still trembling for their fate. The town was a mass of ruins, with many of the houses still on flames. Immense numbers of dead bodies lay scattered about the streets and around the walls, while the heavy surf which beat upon the shore kept tossing the slaughtered multitudes who had fallen upon the beach in its angry waves. Crowds of greedy vultures gloated over the carnage, while the stench, which already began to rise from the putrid corpses, polluted the air, and

excited fears of a pestilence. Meredith assumes that eight thousand Fantees were killed or taken prisoners on this occasion, and the King of Ashantee confessed to a loss of three thousand men chiefly from the fire of the fort. It is possible that there is considerable exaggeration in both these statements.

As soon as Colonel Torrane heard of the attack upon Anamaboe Fort, he sent Captain Bold with a small detachment of three officers and twelve men to its relief. These were taken down by sea, and were landed, on the afternoon of the 16th, without interruption from the Ashantees.

Soon after their arrival, a flag of truce was lowered from the fort walls, and carried to the Ashantee camp amid loud expressions of joy and satisfaction on the part of the Ashantees, who seemed delighted with the prospect of some accommodation.

The king expressed himself willing to come to terms with the whites, against whom he had no cause of quarrel, and negotiations were forthwith commenced. Several Ashantee captains attended the flag back to the fort, and waited upon the commandant. They entered upon a long account of the cause of the invasion, that the governor might be able to understand the whole

merits of the case. They disclaimed the king's intention of making war upon the Europeans, and attributed their attack upon the fort to the English themselves, who had first fired upon the Ashantees. It was agreed that a report of the king's sentiments should be made to the governor, and the Ashantee deputies returned to the camp.

Colonel Torrane was delighted to find the king in this peaceable frame of mind, and appears to have flattered himself into a belief that his majesty would accept an invitation to repair to Cape Coast Castle, to have a quiet talk over their differences. With this view, a handsome present was sent to the king. It was found impossible, however, to get him to accede to the governor's request. He preferred sending a deputation to Cape Coast Castle to treat for him.

In the meantime, to render the negotiations more easy, the governor exerted himself to the utmost to meet the king's wishes, and to prevent the people of Cape Coast from involving themselves in a similar fate with the Anamaboes. He remonstrated with them for giving protection to Cheboo and Apoutay, who had fled to Cape Coast with about five hundred followers when Anamaboe was attacked. Nay, he did more. He concerted measures for seizing them, with the view of deli-

vering them over to their relentless enemy. He succeeded in capturing Cheboo, but Apoutay made his escape. The governor's zeal in his cause was highly gratifying to the king; and the delivery of the revolted Assin chief, who was handed over to his majesty at Anamaboe, paved the way for concessions which might not otherwise have been made. It may be considered that they were purchased at too high a price, when we are compelled to add that the unfortunate man was hacked in pieces to gratify the rage of the insulted monarch.

The governor, finding that nothing of importance could be settled with the king's messengers, determined to proceed to Anamaboe, in the hope of being able to come to terms at a personal interview. A good deal of difficulty arose about the etiquette to be observed at this meeting. The king would not consent to have it in the fort, nor the governor in the king's camp, and so a neutral spot was fixed upon behind the town. It took place on the 23rd of June, and was devoted to ceremonious show and courteous speeches. The king spoke of the great loss which he had sustained from the fire of the fort, admired the bravery of the English and the gallantry displayed by the garrison, and expressed his regret at Mr.

White's wounds; while the governor gently remonstrated with him for his attack after his offers of mediation. Afterwards, when they came upon the subject of business, it was found very difficult to obtain much satisfaction from his majesty.

The disposal of the Fantees who had sought a refuge in the fort, was found to be the most difficult part of their arrangements. The king claimed them as his prisoners, and insisted upon them being delivered over to him. The governor strongly opposed this claim, but in vain. The king was obdurate, and would not consent to be at peace with the English unless his right to these people was acknowledged. It was necessary to come to some conclusion, and soon, for the poor wretches were dying, five and six a day. A middle course was adopted. In consideration of the good service which the governor had rendered the king in seizing Cheboo, he agreed to forego his claim to one-half of the refugees—the other half was to be at the disposal of the governor. This partition was immediately made, and the fort relieved of their presence.

There is a great discrepancy in the accounts which we have of the number of these unfortunate creatures, Mr. Meredith reckoning them at

two thousand, while Colonel Torrane, in his letter to the committee, states it to have been thirteen hundred; but either number sufficiently impresses us with the magnitude of the calamity.

The governor found it impossible to prevail upon the king to make peace with the Fantees. Apoutay was still at large, and Accom, the Essacoomah chief, was again in the field, and, in conjunction with a large body of Fantees, was at present on his march to meet the Ashantee army. Moreover, the king's auxiliaries, who had come for the sake of plunder, would not hear of peace. It was necessary to lead them to new scenes of slaughter and pillage, even had his own inclinations been favourably disposed.

All that the governor could effect was, a promise of protection from his majesty for the towns adjoining the English forts. He also agreed to return to Anamaboe after he had punished his enemies, and to enter into a treaty with the governor. In the meantime, various considerations induced the king to hasten his departure from Anamaboe. His army began to suffer severely from the bad supply of water, as well as from sickness. The air had become poisoned by the pestilential effluvia arising from the putrid bodies of the slain, and Accom and the Fantees

were within a march of the Ashantee army, and prepared to give them battle.

Having collected his forces, which had been scattered over the neighbourhood in small detachments, engaged in pillage, he broke up his camp on the 3rd of July, and went in search of his enemies. Two days afterwards he came upon Accom and the Fantees, a little to the eastward of Cormantine. A battle was fought, which was witnessed by the governor, who reports that the Fantees soon gave way on all sides, leaving the beach completely covered with heaps of dead. The remnants of the defeated force, with Accom at their head, had much difficulty in effecting their escape.

After this defeat, the Fantees never again were able to take the field in force, or to meet their enemies during this war. A predatory warfare, however, still continued to be kept up against the stragglers of the Ashantee army, and insignificant skirmishes frequently took place. They continued their march through the Fantee country in the direction of Accra, leaving in their train one wide field of famine and desolation. They were long encamped in the neighbourhood of Winnebah, which they destroyed in October. Here small-pox

broke out among them, and committed frightful ravages, and at last induced the king to return, in the end of the year, to Coomassie, without returning to Anamaboe, as he had promised to Colonel Torrane. Detachments were left behind at Accra to dispose of their prisoners, or such of them as they did not see fit to carry back to Ashantee.

Such was the commencement and progress of the first decided invasion of the Fantee country by the Ashantees. It was undertaken under the plausible pretext of pursuing the revolted Assins; but it had as its ulterior object, the subjection of the Fantees. The number of the King's army has been variously stated, Meredith supposes them to have been three times more numerous than the Anamaboes, at the time of their attack upon the fort, and he calculates the Anamaboes at fifteen thousand. There is little doubt that the King, as he was with the army in person, had mustered the strength of his wide dominions. Colonel Torrane, in his letter to the committee, mentions that he had twelve inferior and tributary kings in his train. It may not be too high an estimate to fix them perhaps at twenty thousand. Among these were many Moors. One party especially attracted the attention of the officers,

who paid a visit to the King's camp. Meredith, who was present, gives us the following description of them:

"One of these men and his attendants excited some curiosity and attention; his dress and appearance were so different from those of others, that it evidently proved he must have come from countries situated a considerable distance inland. He was a tall, athletic, and rather corpulent man, of a complexion resembling an Arab or an Egyptian. His dress was heavy, and by no means adapted to the climate. He wore a cap, that came down below his ears, and being made of yellow cloth, it did not contribute to diminish his tawny complexion. He was a follower of the Mahommedan religion, and possessed much gravity; but was communicative, condescending, and agreeable. He had about him a great number of sentences from the Alkoran, which were carefully incased in gold and silver, and upon which he set a high value. He was a native of Kassina, a country that appears to be situated to the south-east from Timbuctoo. He said he had been at Tunis and Mecca; had seen many white men and ships, and described the method of travelling over the great desert.

"This person commanded a body of men, who

fought with arrows as well as muskets. Four of the arrows were found in the fort, they were short and pointed with barbed iron. He had many persons in his train, who were of the same colour, but varied a little as to dress. They were all habited in the Turkish manner, but did not wear turbans."

Colonel Torrane speaks in terms of high commendation of the King's manners and deportment, and represents the principal men of his army as being at least half a century in advance of the Fantees. And there is no doubt, that even at this day, the bearing of the higher classes of the Ashantee captains is marked by an aristocratic air and a courtly polish which we do not observe among the Fantees. The lower classes are extremely rude and brutish in their manners, and fit tools of a cruel, barbarous, and despotic government.

We pause here to make a few reflections on the part which the English played in this their first direct intercourse with the Ashantees, and to notice a few circumstances connected with it, which hitherto seem to have been carefully kept out of public view. It is impossible not to admire the very gallant defence made by the little garrison of Anamaboe against the whole strength of the Ashantee army. It must have inspired the King

with a very high idea of the superiority of the English in the art of war, and no doubt checked any ambition which he may have then cherished of making himself master of Cape Coast. It is to be regretted that it should have been the prelude to acts of a very different character, which have left an indelible stain upon our name, and are yet commented upon by the natives of the Gold Coast with strong feelings of detestation and contempt.

What Englishman that has read of the seizure of Cheboo by the Governor of Cape Coast Castle, and the delivering him up to the King of Ashantee, but has a feeling of national blood-guiltiness? It was a gratuitous act of truckling sycophancy, neither warranted by the exigencies of our position, the expectations of the King, nor consistent with the hostile attitude which he had assumed—a bloody peace-offering, made at the expense of honour and humanity. It may be said that it was the means of saving many lives by averting an attack from Cape Coast. But surely there were other means of accomplishing this purpose. Could we not have given the Assins notice that they could not be harboured in Cape Coast, if we did not choose to protect them, without descending to the meanness of becoming jackals for his majesty? Did none of the spirit which

animated the defenders of Anamaboe fort remain to counsel a worthier course?

It has been seen that there was no difficulty in throwing a relief into Anamaboe fort. Why not place it in a better posture of defence, and set the King at defiance? There was but one feeling of hostility against him, throughout the whole of Fantee, which required only to be properly concentrated and directed to insure his fall. But instead of following this course, which was open to us, and which even if unsuccessful, would have eventually strengthened our position in the country by its moral effect, we preferred to compromise our character in the eyes of the Fantees, without even securing the friendship or respect of the King, who must have despised the agent, while he approved the act, well knowing the base and interested motives which gave rise to it. There is a letter, however, of Mr. White's, still preserved among the archives of Cape Coast Castle, which was written after Colonel Torrane's death, and which gives a deeper die of ignominy to this transaction.

On the 10th of February, 1808, he informs the committee, that Colonel Torrane died in debt to the people of Cape Coast for the value of forty slaves, "Assins whom they seized at the time

the governor captured Cheboo, and whom he sold off the Coast!" Here we have a clue to the whole of the infamous transaction.

The governor purchased the co-operation of the towns-people in seizing Cheboo, (to whom they had originally offerred an asylum) upon condition of their being allowed to enslave as many of his followers as they could seize, and to save them the trouble of seeking a market for them, the governor kindly takes them off their hands at once, and no doubt other captives fell to his own share, who became his property without purchase. What a picture have we here of the demoralizing nature of the slave trade! The poor hunted followers of Cheboo, who had faithfully stuck by their master through all reverses of fortune, who had faced the Ashantees in battle, had been protected and defended by several Fantee tribes at the expense of their homes and their lives, and who after innumerable hardships and daring escapes, had carried their chief in safety to Cape Coast, are at last treacherously seized, and remorselessly sold by an English governor! But more remains to be told.

We have seen that Colonel Torrane made great efforts to rescue the refugees who fled to Anamaboe fort from the clutches of the king. The

reader has, no doubt, sympathised with these generous and humane exertions, and has rejoiced that he succeeded in saving at least the half of them from such a fate. But did it ever enter into his mind to suspect that the governor's earnest pleading with the king was dictated by the avarice of the slave-dealer?

The fact is undeniable. The poor wretches, who had hoped to find an asylum in a British fort, were all equally unfortunate. After the king had received his share of them, the remainder were carried to Cape Coast, parcelled out into lots for the governor and members of council, and sold to the slave-ships. These creatures, be it remembered, were natives of Anamaboe and its neighbourhood, and had been born and brought up at the very gate of our fort.

We are pleased to have it to add, that there was one of the members of council who indignantly refused to participate in such iniquitous gains. Mr. John Swanzy was governor of Accra at this time. As soon as he heard of the proceedings of the governor and his colleagues, he rose from a sick-bed, and went to Cape Coast by canoe. Although suffering from a mortal illness, which soon afterwards terminated in death, he hastened to prevent, if possible, the consummation of this

great crime. His indignant remonstrances and threats of exposure were not in vain. The governor and his guilty colleagues, quailed before the angry rebukes of the sick man, strong in the might of a righteous cause. They consented to undo their act, as far as now could be done. But there was much which could not be undone. In the interval which had elasped, many of the poor creatures had been carried from the coast. But there were still some in the ships in the roads, and others in the slave-hold of the castle, who were returned to their homes. Having got all the redress which was in his power, Mr. Swanzy went back to Accra and died; his last moments, no doubt, soothed by the reflection that he had raised a voice of honest indignation against such foul and wicked practices. With a knowledge of these facts we are no longer astonished at the governor's tame submission and mean subserviency to the King of Ashantee.

It would be in vain to look for any generous sympathy, far less any succour for the oppressed Fantees, from one who appears only to have regarded them as so much marketable stuff, to be used for his own advantage.

We learn from another of Mr. White's letters to the committee, in answer to a query respecting

the disposal of the prisoners taken by the Ashantees, that many hundreds were carried up to the Ashantee country, that many were sacrificed at their customs, that others were sold to the shipping and traders, and that a few escaped. During this invasion, the Ashantees maintained a friendly intercourse with Accra and Elmina, and carried on with them a steady traffic in slaves, the prisoners taken in Fantee. The treatment which refugees received from the inhabitants of these towns excited a spirit of bitter enmity, which has not yet altogether subsided, and which led to acts of retaliation which will presently be noticed.

Upon the king's return to Coomassie at the close of 1807, the Fantees were relieved for a brief space of time from active warfare; but no treaty of peace having been concluded, they still continued to maintain a hostile attitude, boasting, indeed, that the Ashantees had been obliged to retreat from the country. The scarcity of provisions and the claims upon the king's attention among other of his refractory tributaries, no doubt compelled him to grant this respite, and even rendered it very desirable to be at peace with Fantee. His general at Accra, in the early part of 1809, communicated a wish to this effect to the governor, requesting him to sound the Fantees

upon the subject. These were encamped at this time in great numbers at Abrah. They obstinately refused to listen to the king's advances, saying he had inflicted upon them all the injury he could, and that they would not be at peace with him. They even threatened to attack Cape Coast, merely because it had not suffered with them in the late warfare. Indeed the object of their encampment at Abrah was to concert measures to revenge themselves upon their enemies, and very soon it became apparent that their plans were fully arranged.

It has been observed that the conduct of the people of Elmina had greatly irritated the Fantees. They attributed the Ashantee invasion to the instigation of a Mr. Neizer, a coloured man of that town, and they accused the Elminas generally of having acted in concert with the Ashantees, and of having seized and sold all the Fantees who fled in that direction from the terror of the king's army. There appeared now a favourable opportunity of taking revenge. With this view the Fantees and Wassaws, with the people of Cape Coast and Anamaboe, confederated together. Governor White was unable to dissuade the people of Cape Coast from this step. Indeed they were forced into it by the Fantees, who

threatened them with an attack if they refused to join the alliance against Elmina. Towards the close of 1809 they formed their camp behind the town, and made various unsuccessful attacks upon it, which failed through the assistance rendered by the Dutch guns from Fort. St. Jago. Finding it impossible to gain possession of Elmina, which they had hoped to plunder and destroy, they proceeded to invest it closely. The inhabitants were sometimes reduced to considerable straits; but having a free communication from seaward, there was no absolute want of supplies. They suffered a good deal, however, from occasional skirmishes; but it is doubtful whether the allies had not the worst of it, being themselves in great distress for provisions.

This state of matters continued until 1811, when the camp was broken up after repeated fruitless attempts to take the place. The King of Ashantee, aware that his friends the Elminas had brought this nest of hornets about them through their attachment to him, felt anxious to give them relief, and in July 1810 renewed his overtures for peace through the governor. After sundry communications, messengers arrived from Coomassie at Accra in October, and were conveyed by sea to Cape Coast Castle, it being unsafe for them to

pass through Fantee. They were commissioned by the king to say that he wished to remain on terms of friendship with the white men, whom he considered his masters, that his invasion of Fantee had been undertaken solely with the view of punishing the Assins; that he was about to send another army for the same purpose, and that moreover he would wage war with all who gave them protection, whether they were white or black.

The governor conveyed this message to the Fantees in camp behind Elmina; but they had not despaired of giving it up to plunder. They therefore turned a deaf ear to the king's threatenings. During this year another party of Fantees, having similar grounds of complaint against the people of Accra, made an attack upon that place, and were repulsed.

It has been seen that from the invasion of the Ashantees in 1807 until 1811, the whole country was in a most distracted state. The authority of the Europeans, Dutch and English, appears to have been scarcely felt. The Elminas murdered their governor (Hoogenboom) in 1808, and during the investment of Elmina all the efforts of Governor De Veer and Governor White were ineffectual to restore peace. Their entreaties, remonstrances,

and threats were treated with equal contempt. The greatest lawlessness prevailed in every district. Pillage, and man-stealing, and murder, were every-day occurrences. In fact, no language can convey an adequate idea of the amount of misery comprised within these three years upon the Gold Coast. The disturbed state of the country did not allow the governor to judge of the effect of the abolition of the slave-trade, but the natives generally wished for its continuance. The governor also felt the inconvenience of not being able to send bad characters out of the country; and he asked for power to hang malefactors on account of the great insecurity of life and property.

CHAPTER V.

The King of Ashantee sends his General, Apokoo, with a large force into Fantee—Defeat of the Fantees—Murder of Mr. Meredith by the Winnebahs—Winnebah Fort destroyed — Appiah Danquah defeats the Fantees — Destroys Winnebah and Berracoo — The Governor's mediation—Ashantees break up their camp at Abrah—The Ashantees return to Coomassie—Mission to the King—Reference made to the Governor—Mr. Hutchison appointed Resident at Coomassie — State of the country.

THE King of Ashantee determined that the Fantees should dearly rue their disregard of his overtures for peace, and on the return of his messengers from Cape Coast Castle, made preparations for a second invasion. His general, Apokoo, was sent with a large army against the Fantees of Winnebah and Berracoo, which he wished still farther to increase by a contingent from his Akim tributaries. With this view, and in accordance

with the custom observed on such occasions, he sent a present of gold with some powder and shot to Attah, the chief of Akim, desiring him to join Apokoo's forces. Attah had accompanied the king in his former invasion, and had done good service at Anamaboe. But he was uneasy under the Ashantee yoke, and cherished a deadly hatred against that powerful nation, on account of the murder of a predecessor by Sai Cudjoe. He received the king's gold and ammunition, and at the same time told the messenger that he would use them, not against the king's enemies, but against the king himself. He recounted all the wrongs which his country had suffered from the kings of Ashantee, and spurned at the idea that he was always to be at the king's call when he wanted to go to war.

When the king was informed of Attah's refusal to serve him longer, he sent another messenger to learn if he had been rightly informed, not wishing, perhaps, to proceed too hastily against such a powerful tributary. But before there was time to learn the result of this second message, Attah committed an overt act of leze-majesty, which precluded all possibility of submission. Learning that one of the king's captains, who had been collecting tribute at Danish Accra, was on his way

to Coomassie with a large amount of treasure, he intercepted him and killed the whole party, except one man, whom he spared that he might tell the king what he had done, and convey his defiance.

Apokoo's army had not yet crossed the Prah when the news of this outrage reached Coomassie. He received immediate orders to march into Akim, and to subdue the revolt there, while Appia Danqua, another Ashantee general, was detached with six thousand men against the Fantees. Attah, in the mean time, was active in his preparations to meet the Ashântee army. He induced Quow Saffatchie, the chief of the Aquapims, to throw off the king's yoke, and to join his forces with the Akims. Their combined army gave battle to Apokoo as soon as he entered Akim, and fought with such determined bravery, that the Ashantees had nearly been overcome. The battle was long and obstinate, and was only put a stop to by the approach of night. Neither party could claim the victory. The loss of the Ashantees, however, was so great, as to deter Apokoo from renewing the contest without additional strength. He therefore sent an order to the Accras to join him, which they did, in such numbers as to make resistance vain. The Akims and Aquapims made a separation of their forces and a precipitate re-

treat, the former in the direction of Fantee, and the latter towards the Volta. Apokoo went in pursuit of these, but was unable to bring them to action or to secure the person of their chief, Quow Saffatchie. The Ashantee general accused Mr. Lindt, the Danish commandant of Addah Fort, of conniving at his escape, and made him prisoner. He was detained five months in the Ashantee camp in Aquapim, but treated with kindness and respect, until ransomed by his government by the payment of a hundred ounces of gold. Soon afterwards the Ashantees were recalled to Coomassie, without effecting the objects of the campaign, for Quow had successfully eluded the pursuit of Apokoo, and after the withdrawal of the king's army, he resumed his independent authority. Nor was the king more fortunate in his attempts to crush Attah. We have seen that, after separating his forces from the Aquapims, he took the direction of the Fantee country. He hoped to bring Appia Danquah, the king's general, who had been sent against the Fantees, to action, and taking advantage of the wide separation of the two divisions of the Ashantee army, under Appia Danquah and Apokoo, he was elated with the idea of striking a blow which might enable him eventually to cut off the latter. His

little army consisted only of three thousand followers, but they were a brave race, and were actuated by an indomitable spirit, which the vigorous and resolute character of their chief was so well calculated to inspire.

While he is urging them on in the track of Appia Danquah's army, we will notice briefly how this general had been occupied in Fantee. Soon after his entry into the country, in the early part of 1811, he was met by small bodies of Fantees, who offered but a feeble resistance against the invaders. Several insignificant skirmishes took place, always in favour of the Ashantees, who prosecuted their march through Insarbah and Agoonah to the coast, which they reached near to Winnebah. Here a more combined effort was made to oppose them.

The Fantees of Anamaboe, Adjumacon, Appam, Mumford, Winnebah, and Goomwah Assin formed a camp near Mumford, and waited the approach of the Ashantees. The hostile armies encountered each other near Appam, and a severe conflict took place, attended with great slaughter. The determined bravery of the Ashantees, however, gained for them a complete victory. Many prisoners were taken, and among others, Bafoo, the Cabboccer of Anamaboe. Mr. Smith, the

commandant of Tantum Fort, opened a communication with the Ashantee general, but could get no clue to his ultimate intentions further than that he intended to proceed to Elmina, no doubt with the view of forcing the Fantees to raise the siege of that town. But if such were Appiah Danquah's expectations, he was doomed to see them frustrated. While encamped near Tantum Fort, after his action with the Fantees, his implacable enemy, Attah, was hastening with the greatest impetuosity to meet him. The rumour of his approach struck terror among the Ashantees, weakened as they were by their late action. The redoubtable name also of their new opponent reminded them forcibly that it was no longer the feeble efforts of the Fantees which they had to oppose.

The firmness of Appiah Danquah gave way under these reflections, and prudence counselled a retreat. Attah pursued, came up with the retiring army, engaged and routed it. In the end of March, he sent to inform the governor of Cape Coast that he was determined to pursue the Ashantees and to oppose them to the last, to avenge the heavy wrongs which they had inflicted on his country. The governor declared himself neutral, but offered his assistance as a mediator. But

peace did not suit the temper of Attah's mind, and so he contrived to follow the Ashantees into the interior. Appiah Danquah, with the remnants of his force, was obliged to fly from the Fantee country, and to seek an asylum in Assin.

In the meantime, Attah seems to have formed a junction with the Fantees. His object was, now that he had rid Fantee of Appiah Danquah's army, to wheel round and cut off Apokoo's retreat from Coomassie. But he was arrested in the midst of this daring career by death. Small-pox broke out in his army, and Attah fell a victim to it in October, while on his march back to Akim.

There seems to have been many traits of a noble though wild and irregular nature in the character of this chief. His lofty spirit of independence, and the gallant and hitherto successful efforts which he had made to throw off the Ashantee yoke, endeared him greatly to his people. He visited the commandant of Tantum Fort, and, although in the main friendly disposed towards him, he nevertheless gave indications of a wild and eccentric disposition. The commandant considered it prudent not to thwart him, and submitted quietly to many little encroachments upon his dignity. He had not much regard for the rights of private property, and helped himself to any-

thing in the commandant's quarters which took his fancy, never considering that he was doing anything which his position at the head of an army of occupation did not give him a right to exact.

The feelings of the commandant towards him appear to have been somewhat akin to those of the Glasgow baillie to his redoubted cousin, Rob Roy, and his relief as great when he was rid of his presence. Before his attack upon the Ashantees, he entered the Dutch fort of Appam, where he was less forbearing. He threw the guns over the batteries, and released a number of Cape Coast people whom he found prisoners, and who had been *panyarred* by the Dutch at Appam. He left behind him a reputation for daring courage and skilful generalship, and bequeathed to his people a spirit of noble independence, which all the tyranny of Ashantee has never been able to extinguish. His death, however, intercepted the blow which he had well-nigh struck at the Ashantee power.

His brother, who succeeded him, did not enter into his patriotic schemes. He was inclined to make peace with the King of Ashantee, and to hold his power in vassalage, in order that, relieved from foreign war, he might the more securely in-

dulge in the freaks of a capricious and tyrannical disposition. His people could ill brook this change of policy and conduct in their ruler, so soon after the glories of Attah's reign. They took counsel together to put him to death, but they would not imbrue their hands in the blood of their chief. They represented to him, that it was necessary for him to die for his country's good, and commanded him to put a period to his own existence. All his entreaties could only obtain for him a week's respite. He employed it in performing his own obsequies, by drinking, singing, and dancing, after the manner observed by the natives at funeral customs.

He was succeeded on the throne of Akim by Cudjoe Coomah, whom the Akims advanced to the supreme authority by election. This chief appears to have inherited much of Attah's spirit, as well as his enmity to the Ashantees, whom he shut up in their country for the space of two years, during which time the Fantees enjoyed a short interval of peace.

But though relieved from external war, the country was by no means free from internal dissensions and commotions. In 1812, a body of Fantees, in conjunction with Quow Suffatchie, of Akim, attacked Accra, to satisfy the old grudge

which they still bore them on account of their friendship with the Ashantees. After a severe contest, they were signally repulsed. The Fantees were also anxious to return to the attack of the Elminas, but the remembrance of their former sufferings and defeat had the effect of cooling their ardour and of counselling peace.

There does not appear to have been any great advances made by the Europeans in obtaining a beneficial influence over the natives; and the smuggling of slaves, which was carried on almost without check, gave no room for any improvement in the moral or social condition of the people, who conducted themselves with great lawlessness. In February, 1812, the people of Winnebah seized their commandant, Mr. Meredith, and carried him into the bush, where they maltreated him in a shocking manner, causing him to walk uncovered in the heat of the sun over burning grass and shrubs. He died from the effects of their barbarous cruelty, and the governor of Cape Coast, assisted by a man-of-war, destroyed their town, and abandoned and blew up the fort.

For many years afterwards, English vessels passing Winnebah were in the habit of pouring a broadside into the town, to inspire the natives with an idea of the severe vengeance which would be ex-

acted for the spilling of European blood. With the exception of a feeble attempt on the part of the governor to introduce the cultivation of cotton (samples of which he sent home in 1811), there is nothing worthy of observation during the two years of peace, which the vigilance of the Akim chief, Cudjoe Coomah, secured for the country.

In 1814, the King of Ashantee made a great effort to crush the Akims and Aquapims, who had continued in a state of revolt since 1811. With this view he collected an army of twenty thousand men, whom he placed under the command of his general, Amanquah. He was fully determined to throw open the path, to renew his communication with Accra, and to draw from thence the arrears of pay, which had remained uncollected since the last invasion. Amanquah was also charged to receive the submission of Cudjoe Coomah and Quow Saffatchie, who, it was supposed, would sue for peace on the approach of such an overwhelming force.

But to provide against their escape, Appiah Danquah was sent at the same time with a smaller force in the direction of Winnebah, for the purpose of intercepting them on that side. Amanquah moved towards Aquapim with his army. When within a day's march of that place, one of his

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foraging parties was cut off by Cudjoe Coomah, who gave battle to the whole Ashantee force on the day following, at Agueassoo. The battle lasted six hours, and ended in the defeat of the Akims and their allies. Amanquah proclaimed his victory to the Accras by sending a jaw-bone and a slave to each of the towns, and soon afterwards followed with his army. He remained in the neighbourhood of Accra for nearly a year, and levied contributions throughout the country. He afterwards returned to Aquapim, where he received a message from the king, desiring him never to return to Coomassie unless he brought with him the heads of Cudjoe and Quow.

Having deposited the baggage of his army at Accra, he took a Fetish oath, with his captains, that they would fulfil the king's command, and never return to their country without the heads of the king's enemies. In the meantime the party under Appiah Danqüah had encountered the Fantees on several occasions. The Adjumacon and Agoonah people were defeated with great loss, the towns of Winnebah and Berracoo were plundered and burnt, and the Fantees were subjected to the most cruel impositions.

Appiah Danquah having died in Assin, he was succeeded in the command of his army by Appiah

Nanu. This latter had incurred the king's displeasure from his inactivity, and Amanquah was ordered to unite his forces with him in the Fantee country. They met at Essacoomah, and conjointly continued their march through Adjumacon. The Fantees fled before them, scarcely daring to make any resistance. They encamped at Abrah, where a large body of the Fantees had assembled to give them battle, but fled at the first onset.

Crowds of people kept flocking to the forts for protection. Upwards of four thousand men, women, and children are represented to have fled to Cape Coast Castle for refuge. The governor sent a flag of truce to the Ashantee general, to know his intentions; but in the meantime, the Ashantees approached nearer and nearer to the Castle. On the 13th of March a large body of them appeared behind Mource, while another party, principally Assins, under the command of Quashiemanqua, showed themselves at the salt-pond quite close to the town, and had a slight skirmish with some of the Cape Coast people.

On the 16th, messengers arrived from the camp at Abrah, and explained that the king's army had come to Fantee in pursuit of Cudjoe Coomah, Quow Saffatchie, and Coffee Ashantee, and to punish all who harboured them. It was known to

the Ashantee general, that Quow Aggery, Paintry, and Amissah, three Fantee chiefs, had stood in arms against the Ashantees for the defence of these men, and it was doubtful whether they were not at present in Cape Coast. The governor offered his mediation to settle the palaver, and General Daendels, the governor of Elmina, also wished to co-operate. A meeting for this purpose was therefore held in the hall of the castle on the 21st, at which a deputation of officers from Elmina was present. The head men of Cape Coast took a Fetish oath, that Cudjoe Coomah, Quow Saffatchie, and Coffee Ashantee were not in Cape Coast.

The messengers were satisfied on this point, and now demanded Quow Aggery, Paintry, and Amissah to be delivered up to them, to go to the camp, as they had been in arms against the king. They agreed to accompany the messengers, provided they would take the king's oath, that they should be safe. It was at last arranged that one hundred ounces of gold should be paid by the Cape Coast people, and the Fantees, to purchase peace with the Ashantees. This was done, and their friendship cemented with a Fetish oath.

Soon afterwards the Ashantees broke up their camp in Abrah, and went in the direction of Accra in search of the proscribed men. There was no

more attempt at resistance on the part of the Fantees, from whom the Ashantees, now considering the country conquered, levied heavy contributions. They were spread over the whole country in separate detachments, making active search for the revolted chiefs, and inflicting the greatest misery upon the inhabitants. Cudjoe Coomah was so hotly pursued, that he put a period to his own existence, being unable to escape from a party of Appiah Nanu's force, who surrounded him at Incoom, near Essacoomah.

Soon afterwards Quow Saffatchie fell by the treachery of his brother, Adoo Danquah, who had hitherto accompanied him through all his wanderings, and was at last wearied out with them. He went to the Accras, and concerted with them to deliver his brother into the hands of the Ashantees, who promised to prevail with the king to make him chief of Aquapim. He conducted a party of Accras and Ashantees to his lurking-place, placed an ambush around him, and then proceeded to enter into conversation with him. He advised him to kill himself, as it was impossible for him to escape the king's vigilance, but Quow refused, alleging that he would wear out the king's patience.

Upon this Adoo Danquah left him, which was the preconcerted signal for the party in ambush,

who fired and killed him. The object of the expedition was now attained. Coffee Ashantee, it is true, had not yet been seized, but the king was not anxious that he should be killed. Amanquah therefore returned to Coomassie, having thus reduced Akim and Aquapim to a state of vassalage as well as established the king's authority throughout Fantee.

Ashantee residents were left behind in charge of the principal districts, whose duty it was to maintain the Fantees in subjection, and to collect the king's tribute. In the execution of this duty, they exercised great tyranny, and seldom were at a loss for an excuse for their exactions. The mere suspicion of disaffection was sufficient to draw upon any chief or head man the infliction of heavy fines, and large sums were thus paid by Ammooney, chief of Anamaboe, and others, for the support which they had given to Cudjoe Coomah. In the early part of 1817 presents were sent out by the committee for the King of Ashantee. It was deemed a favourable opportunity, now that his wars in Fantee were concluded, to enter into some treaty with this monarch whereby peace might be established on a surer footing, and the country laid open for the prosecution of lawful commerce. Mr. John Hope

Smith, the governor, selected Mr. James, the Commandant of Accra, to conduct the mission, and associated with him in the embassy Messrs. Bowdich, Hutchison, and Tedlie, the latter a surgeon in the service. It was part of its object to establish a British residency or consulate at Coomassie, and it was intended, if its purposes were fully accomplished, to leave Mr. Hutchison as resident at the king's court. They set out from Cape Coast Castle on the 22nd of April. There being no beasts of burden in the country, their mode of travelling was by hammock, carried by natives. They had, therefore, with them a large suite of one hundred and thirty people, bearers, servants, and interpreters included. They arrived at Coomassie after a very toilsome journey of twenty-seven days, having been subjected to innumerable annoyances and delays from the refractory and disobedient conduct of their carriers, who sometimes would throw down their loads, and leave them.

In passing through the Fantee and Assin countries, they were much struck with the traces of desolation which the Ashantees had everywhere left behind them. There was scarcely a vestige of cultivation to be seen, and heaps of ruined and deserted villages appeared on every side. They

traversed long tracts without seeing a human being. Collections of wretched hovels scattered here and there at long intervals amidst the ruins of once populous towns formed the only habitations. Around these the miserable natives stalked with the gaunt and sullen aspect of famine and despair. There was difficulty in finding a path through the tangled forests. The land was one dreary wilderness, given up to misery and neglect, where the voice of human sympathy was unknown, and even the song of birds was unheard. After crossing the Prah, and on their nearer approach to Coomassie, there were indications of greater prosperity and security. The villages were more numerous and populous, and not in the same state of delapidation, the people more cheerful and active, and the plantations better cared for; but, withal, it was impossible to associate the idea of contentment and happiness with the apparent poverty of the masses, and the stealthy suspicious looks of the chiefs.

On their arrival at Coomassie, they were honoured with a public reception, intended, from the display of barbarous pomp and wealth, to impress them with the greatness of the king. It appeared to give him great pleasure to see white men at his court; the etiquette of which was

observed by himself and his head men with a punctilious courtesy, and a laboured and ceremonious formality, which they were scarcely prepared to find. This good-breeding never deserted them in private intercourse, or on state occasions of mere ceremony; but in the transaction of business, and the discussion of political questions, they were very frequently violent, boisterous, and rude; and on several occasions the personal safety of the members of the embassy was in imminent jeopardy. Their first interview upon business was a scene of unbridled passion and violence on the part of the king and his chiefs, partly real and partly feigned, with the view of overawing the English officers. Mr. James was so much impressed by it, as to lose that coolness and self-possession so necessary in all dealings with African chiefs, and but for the superior firmness and management of Mr. Bowdich, a decided rupture must have been the consequence. Nay, it is doubtful whether the lives of the officers would not have been the forfeit. The cause of the outburst remains to be told, as it will best show the king's views with regard to his late invasion of Fantee, and at the same time give an idea of the new relations established between the two countries.

It has been mentioned that the Europeans paid to the native chiefs a ground-rent for the forts, as well as monthly notes to several of the chiefs. These payments were evidently regarded by the natives as an acknowledgment of their sovereignty of the country, and that our establishments were held on sufferance, not by conquest or purchase. When the King of Ashantee conquered Denkera, the pay-note which the King of Denkera held from the Dutch for Elmina Castle was transferred to the conqueror. In like manner the notes for Accra fell into his hands on the conquest of Akim. These were to him additional confirmation of his right of sovereignty over the countries which he had conquered, written proofs in fact to which he and his successors might always appeal in the event of cavil or dispute. Now, the present question was the surrender of the pay-notes held by the Fantee chiefs.

It appears that this point had been discussed and arranged by the king's messengers, and the Fantee chiefs in the Ashantee camp at Abrah, after peace had been concluded between them at Cape Coast Castle. The agreement then made was, that a portion should be deducted from the Fantee notes, and paid to the king, the Fantee chiefs drawing the remainder themselves. Hav-

ing agreed to this partition of the pay, they came to the governor to alter the notes, reducing those held by the Fantees, and issuing new ones to the king for the amounts conceded to him. This was done by the governor upon the understanding that he had nothing to do with the arrangement, and that it was made with the mutual consent of the king and the Fantee chiefs.

It soon appeared, however, that the king had been no party to this compromise. The Fantees, no doubt, unwilling to give up these proofs of sovereignty, had cajoled the king's messengers into an acceptance of part, under the plea that this concession was to be regarded, not as a token of their subjection to, but of their friendship with the king. They believed that they might, by this subterfuge, avert the mortifying confession that they were, in reality, a conquered nation.

But the king had no idea of half measures of this kind. At his first interview, on business, with Mr. James, he presented the notes which had been brought to him by his messengers, and requested them to be read. Whether he had been previously acquainted or not with their contents has not been said, but when he heard them read, and learned that it was only a part of the payment which was to be made to him, he broke

out into a most uncontrollable fit of rage. His captains were equally furious, and swore that they would set out that night to take the heads of the Fantee chiefs.

Mr. James volunteered no explanation, and seemed incapable of acting as the emergency required; and the assembly was breaking up in confusion to go and put their threats into execution, when Mr. Bowdich interposed. He requested to be heard. The king and chiefs assented. He spoke with much animation, and recounted the object of the embassy, which was to establish and confirm the peace which had been concluded at Cape Coast. He was not aware that there was any insurmountable difficulty about the arrangement of the pay-notes. The governor, not knowing that there would be any question about them, had not given any instructions upon the subject. He was sure, however, that he was most anxious for peace, and willing to do what was just and right. He proposed that the king should defer coming to any conclusion until the governor should be communicated with, and offered to write at once to know his sentiments upon the subject.

The king and his chiefs were appeased by Mr. Bowdich's conciliatory address. His proposal was

adopted; and in the meantime, mutual explanations having been given, their friendly intercourse was resumed. The king dictated a letter to the governor on the subject of these notes.

As it gives a very succinct account of his wars with Fantee, and a just idea of his own views, and is, at the same time, a great curiosity, it may gratify the reader to see it introduced here. By bearing in mind the account which has been given of these wars, he will be able to understand the king's narration.

Sai Tootoo Quamina, King of Ashantee and its dependencies, to John Hope Smith, Esquire, Governor-in-Chief of the British possessions on the Gold Coast of Africa.*

"The king sends his compliments to the governor. He thanks the King of England and him very much for the presents sent to him. He thinks them very handsome. The king's sisters and all his friends have seen them, and think them very handsome, and thank him. The king thanks his God and his Fetish that he

* This letter of the king is taken from Mr. Bowdich's work.

made the governor send the white men's faces for him to see, like he does now. He likes the English very much, and the governor all the same as his brother.

"The King of England has made war against all the other white people a long time, and killed all the people all about, and taken all the towns—French, Dutch, and Danish—all the towns all about. The King of Ashantee has made war against all the people of the water-side, and all the black men all about, and taken all their towns.

"When the King of England takes a French town, he says: 'Come, all this is mine; bring all your books, and give me all your pay!' and if they do not do it, does the governor think the King of England likes it? So the king has beat the Fantees now two times, and taken all their towns, and they send and say to him: 'You are a great king—we want to serve you;' but he says: 'Ha, you want to serve me. Then bring all your books what you got from the forts;' and then they send him four ackies.* This vexes him too much.

"The first time he made war against the Fantees, two great men in Assin quarrelled; so half the people came to Ashantee, half went to Fantee.

* An ackie is the sixteenth part of an ounce of gold.

The king said, 'What is the reason of this?' so he sent his gold swords, and comes to know why they did so, and the Fantees killed his messengers, and took all their gold. After they fought with the Elminas and Accras, the Fantees sent word to the king they would serve him. The king sent word to the Assins, if it is true that the Fantees want to serve me, let me hear. After that they sent to say: 'Yes, they tired of fighting, and wanted to serve him.' He said: 'Well, give me some gold what you get from the books, and then you shall hear what palaver I got in my head, and we can be friends.' And then he sent some messengers, and after they waited more than two years, the Fantees sent word back: 'No; we don't want to serve the king, but only to make the path open and get good trade.' This vexed the king too much.

"Then the Fantees sent to a strong man, Cudjoe Coomah, and said: 'Come let us put our heads together against the king.' After that, when the king heard this, he sent one—not a great man, but his own slave—and said: 'Well, you will do. Go kill all the people, all the Aquapims and Akims and all!' and so he killed all; and after he killed all, he came and told him. When he sent against Akim, the people in Akim

sent word that they told their head men not to vex the king, but they would not mind them. So he killed the head people, and the others begged his pardon.

"When the king went to fight with the Fantees, they sent this saucy word: 'We will kill you and your people, and stand on you.' Then they did not kill one Ashantee captain, but the king killed all the Fantee captains and people. They did not stand on him.

"That time after the king fought, all the Fantees sent word: 'Well, we will serve you, but you must not send more harm to hurt us. We don't want to fight more, but to make good friends with you.' Then the king said: 'What cabboceer lives at Cape Coast and Anamaboe? What books they get from the forts, let them send all, and then we can be friends.' And the king sent word, too: 'If my messengers go to Cape Coast Fort, and if they bring pots of gold and casks of goods, then I can't take that, but I must have the books.'

"After that, the king sent word to the Governor of Cape Coast and the Governor of Anamaboe: 'Well, you know I have killed all the Fantees, and I must have Adooco's book and Ammooney's book, and I can make friends with

you, good brother and good heart. But now they send four ackies, that is what makes the king's heart break out, when he looks at the book and thinks of four ackies; and his captains swear that the Fantees are rogues, and want to cheat him. When the white men see the Fantees do this, and the English officers bring him this four Ackies, it makes him get up very angry; but he has no palaver with white men.

"All Fantee is his—all the black man's country is his. He hears that white men bring all the things that come here; he wonders they do not fight with the Fantees, for he knows they cheat them. Now he sees white men, and he thanks God and his Fetish for it.

"When the English made Appollonia Fort, he fought with the Aowins, the masters of that country, and killed them. Then he said to the cabboceer: 'I have killed all your people—your book is mine.' The cabboceer said: 'True; so long as you take my town, the book belongs to you.'

"He went to Denkera and fought, and killed the people. Then he said: 'Give me the book you got from Elmina.' So they did, and now Elmina belongs to him.

"The English fort at Accra gave a book to an

Akim cabboceer, called Aboigin Adjumawcon. The king killed him, and took the book. The Dutch fort gave a book to another Akim cabboceer, Curry Curry Appam. The Danish fort gave a book to another Akim cabboceer, Juoro Akim. The king killed all, and took their books.

The king, Sai, is young on the stool, but he keeps always in his head what old men say, for it is good; and his great men and linguists tell it him every morning. The King of England makes three great men, and sends one to Cape Coast, one to Anamaboe, and one to Accra. Cape Coast is the same as England. The king gets two ounces from Accra every moon, and the English wish to give him only four ackies for the big fort at Cape Coast, and the same for Anamaboe. Do white men think this proper?

"When the king killed the Denkera cabboceer, and got two ounces from Elmina, the Dutch governor said: 'This is a proper king, we shall not play with him,' and made the book four ounces. The king has killed all the people, and the forts are his. He sent his captains to see white men; now he sees them, and thanks God and his Fetish. If the path was good when the captains went, the king would have gone under the forts, and seen all the white men. The

Ashantees take good gold to Cape Coast, but the Fantees mix it. He sent some of his captains like slaves, to see, and they saw it. Ten handkerchiefs are cut to eight, water is put to rum, and charcoal to powder, even for the king. They cheat him, but he thinks white men give all those things proper to the Fantees.

"The king knows the King of England is his good friend, for he has sent him handsome dashes.* He knows his officers are his good friends, for they come to see him. The king wishes the governor to send to Elmina to see what is paid him there, and to write the King of England how much, as the English say their nation passes the Dutch. He will see by the books given him by both forts. If the King of England does not like that, he may send him himself what he please, and then Sai can take it.

"He thanks the king and governor for sending four white men to see him. The old king wished to see some of them, but the Fantees stop it. He is but a young man, and sees them; and so again he thanks God and his Fetish."

The arguments of the king upon this point, backed by the representations of Mr. Bowdich,

* Presents.

induced the governor to arrange the question of the notes to the king's satisfaction. The representatives from the people of Cape Coast, who accompanied the mission, confessed to the truth of the previous compromise having been made without the governor having been farther concerned in the arrangement of the question of the notes, than changing them at the joint request of the Fantee chiefs and the king's messengers. They now withdrew their claim to any part of the payment. The notes were made over to the king, and the subjection of the Fantees acknowledged by the act.

Having got rid of this difficulty, it might be thought that the way was now sufficiently paved for concluding a treaty of peace. But black diplomatists never reveal the whole extent of their demands at once. It is their cunning to proceed step by step to the accomplishment of their wishes, in order to prevent alarm being taken at their full magnitude, rightly jndging that, after important concessions had been made, it was not likely that negotiations would be broken off for minor considerations. No sooner, then, had the question of the pay-notes been disposed of, than the king broached another preliminary difficulty. It will be best explained by giving an extract

from the king's letter to the governor, dated Coomassie, July 9th, 1817.

"The king wants to begin the union without any palaver remaining, and as this Commendah palaver is the only one, it must be settled, and if you do this, he will take care the Elminas shall not do wrong to the Fantees, but he will help you in all your palavers.

"The Elminas are always sending him messages about the insulting conduct and the expressions of the Commendahs towards him; and this is very vexatious to him, so he wishes to put an end to it with your help.

"Adoo Bradie, his favourite nephew, the son of the former king, Sai Quamina, is sent with a proper captain, Quantree, to help you to settle the palaver.

"Two thousand ounces is the demand.

"The origin of the palaver is, that after the king returned from his own campaign against the Fantees, the Commendahs went to the Elminas, and said: 'Well, you helped the king, and now he has gone back we will fight for it.'

"Again, when a war was about to take place between the Cape Coast people and the Elminas, the Commendahs went to the latter, and said: 'Well, we will help you, if you give us plenty of

powder to fight for you.' They did so, and immediately the Commendahs used it to seize ninety-eight Elminas, and sold them as slaves; this, the king thinks you will say is very bad.

"The Cape Coast people and the Fantees, having joined against the Elminas, they sent to tell the king, stating that it was because they had not resisted him, when he came down against the Fantees; adding, that the Commendahs, who were their natural allies before, had now joined their enemies, and begging the king to revenge this act of perfidy. The king much angered, immediately sent a captain for the purpose of their destruction (Yaquokooko), but the Dutch governor sent to him, and then sent to the king to beg him to stop, because the English and Dutch being one, it would put shame on his face."

These old grudges against the people of Commendah were still rankling in the king's mind, and goaded on by the instigation of the Elminas, he refused to come to any terms of accommodation until his insulted dignity was appeased. Notwithstanding all the entreaties and representations of the governor, of the great poverty of the Commendahs, and their total inability to satisfy his demands, he still persisted in them. After a great deal of negotiation, he at last consented to com-

promise the matter by the payment by the Commendahs of one hundred and twenty ounces of gold to himself, with the usual perquisites to his captains, and their acknowledgment of fealty to him.

He now requested the governor's interference to obtain redress for him for insults offered by the people of Amissah. In this case he accepted their apologies and retractation. His next demand was a renewal of the slave trade, but having been made to understand, that its abolition was the act of the king and the Parliament of England, over which the governor had no control, and to which he was bound to force submission, he readily comprehended the impossibility of a compliance with this demand.

Having thus removed all the obstacles in the way of peace, a treaty was at last concluded on the 7th of September, 1817. The Fantee tribes were now reduced to the position of tributaries of the king of Ashantee; but not to the full extent of subjection of the other nations conquered by him. An acknowledgment of a species of protectorate was interposed between them and their master, which ought greatly to have mitigated the severity of their servitude. The fourth article of the treaty was:

"In order to avert the horrors of war, it is

agreed, that in any case of aggression on the part of the natives under British protection, the king shall complain thereof to the governor-in-chief to obtain redress, and that they will in no instance resort to hostilities, even against the other towns of the Fantee territory, without endeavouring as much as possible to effect an amicable arrangement, affording the governor the opportunity of propitiating it, as far as he may with discretion."

And again the eighth article provides against the indiscriminate licence of the Ashantees individually.

"The governor-in-chief reserves to himself the right of punishing any subject of Ashantee or Dwabin guilty of secondary offences; but in case of any crime of magnitude, he will send the offender to the king, to be dealt with according to the laws of his country."

The concluding paragraph of a letter from the king to the governor after the treaty was signed, would seem to favour the idea that the king altogether made over the government of the Fantees to the English. He says:

"I will thank you to impress on the king of England, that I have sworn not to renew the war with the Fantees, out of respect to him, and I shall consider them his people. I hope therefore

he will, in turn, consider if he cannot renew the slave trade, which will be good for me."

But these provisions, it must be confessed, were found but a poor guarantee against the tyrannical oppression of the conquerors, and the sequel will show, that this treaty, considered at the time fraught with so many advantages to the country, was little better than so much waste paper. It is fair to admit, however, that the Fantees and the English authorities appear to have been more chargeable with blame for the renewal of hostilities than the king.

The object of the mission having now been accomplished, Mr. Bowdich and Dr. Tedlie returned to Cape Coast, leaving Mr. Hutchison in the position of British Resident at Coomassie. Mr. James had previously returned, having been recalled on account of his incompetency. During the residence of the gentlemen comprising the mission at Coomassie, much curious information was obtained respecting the countries in the interior subject to Ashantee. Mr. Bowdich has given us many interesting details respecting them, having derived his knowledge principally from Moors, large numbers of whom were then residing at the capital. But the region beyond Ashantee having up to this time remained sealed

against the enterprise of European travellers, and there having been no means of testing the correctness of the information given him, it would be idle to reproduce it here.

Mr. Hutchison continued for some months on terms of friendly intercourse with the king and his people, whose respect he appears to have preserved; but a war having broken out with Buntookoo, which engaged the whole attention of the Ashantees, and his presence not being very agreeable at such a time, from a fear of his being a witness of any reverse to his Majesty's arms, it was thought advisable to recal him. Soon after, the king withdrew all the Ashantees from the Fantee country, and closed the paths, in order that he might, unobserved, prosecute his wars in the interior.

The events of the last few years, which we have just been recording, show a gradually increasing influence on the part of the English. There can be little doubt, that it was out of fear or respect for them that Cape Coast was relieved from the Ashantee army upon such moderate terms. They were also the means of saving Commendah from destruction, and generally the advantage of their protection, inadequate as it was to secure great benefits, was felt and acknowledged.

But a vast amount of oppression and lawless violence still prevailed throughout the wide extent of Fantee, as well on the part of the native chiefs as of the Ashantees. The former had not yet learned to tame down their stubborn and turbulent dispositions in obedience to the white men. Their short-sighted views of human conduct had never revealed to them that "honesty is the best policy." A present advantage, however obtained, whether at the expense of violence, robbery, or even murder, had for them irresistible attractions. They almost invariably yielded to it, regardless of consequences, and a day of retribution. The slave trade was still actively prosecuted by Spaniards and others, and perhaps from the smuggling, under-hand character which the traffic had now assumed, it was attended with a greater amount of violence and injustice. Its abolition by Spain had had no effect in checking it, as the fast-sailing Spanish vessels were more than a match for the men-of-war. No less than seven large slave vessels were taking in cargoes near Cape Coast Castle in February, 1818.

The hopes which the governor and council had formed of an increase of legitimate commerce were entirely disappointed, owing chiefly to the encouragement given to the slave trade by General

Daendels and the Elminas, which made them in better odour with the natives. Legal trade had still farther to contend against the piratical acts of these slavers, which were of very frequent recurrence. Panyarring, or the forcible seizure of unprotected travellers, which had been much suppressed, was again revived in full vigour. The governor, Mr. Smith, did his utmost to check this lawless spirit, and on several occasions acted with great determination and energy. He sent an expedition against the people of Lagoe, who had seized a set of Cape Coast canoe-men, and compelled them to deliver them up; and by imposing a fine, he struck a heavy blow at this iniquitous practice. He also banished Brew, a coloured man, from Cape Coast, for his intrigues with Ashantee to uphold the trade in slaves, and exercised generally such a beneficial influence as his limited means permitted. But his power was very inadequate to redress the heavy wrongs which were daily inflicted. To add to the miseries of the people, there was a famine in the land in 1816, induced by the restrictions put upon cultivation by the Ashantee invasion, as well as by their consumption of the fruits of the earth.

The officers of the government, and the government itself, contributed to the extent of

their ability to alleviate the distress of the poor, but thousands died from this cause. The shield of the government. was sometimes successfully interposed to save the victims of a cruel superstition. Upon the occasion of the death of the King of Cape Coast, one of the head men was accused of witchcraft, and was sentenced to death by torture. The governor rescued him from this fate, but was obliged to send him to Sierra Leone for protection.

A school was established for the education of native children, and an incipient attempt made to improve the moral, social, and political condition of the people.

CHAPTER VI.

Mr. Dupuis appointed Consul at Coomassie — Insults offered to the Ashantee Resident — Embassy sent to demand satisfaction — Dignified conduct of the messengers — Conclusion of a treaty — Disavowed by the Governor—Mr. Dupuis leaves the Coast—Cape Coast placed in a state of blockade by the King—African Company abolished—Sir Charles McCarthy appointed Governor—Seizure of a Sergeant in the Government service—Commencement of hostilities—Battle of Essamacow—Defeat and death of Sir Charles—Defeat of the Ashantees at Affetoo—The King encamps within sight of Cape Coast—Attack upon the lines—The King's alarm and retreat—Overthrow of the Ashantee army—Arrival of Sir Neil Campbell.

DURING the progress of the Gaman war, the English authorities remained in a state of great ignorance respecting its probable result. At the close of 1818, the governor informs the committee that a few Ashantee stragglers had reached the coast in a miserable plight; but they would give

no information about the state of matters in Ashantee. In the meantime, the home government, anxious to cultivate a friendly intercourse with the king, appointed Mr. Dupuis, Consul for Coomassie. He arrived upon the coast in the beginning of 1819, and found our political relations with his majesty in a most unsatisfactory state. The long silence respecting the Gaman war gave rise to rumours of the king's defeat. The people of Cape Coast were willing to believe these reports, and made them the subject of triumphant exultation over the Ashantee resident. The governor also did not discourage them, nor did he appear sorry to see the people of Cape Coast inclined to withdraw themselves from Ashantee domination. In consequence of this feeling, the Ashantee traders were not allowed to come to Cape Coast for some time.

But while the Cape Coast people were indulging their imaginations with agreeable pictures of the king's disasters, messengers arrived from his majesty to demand satisfaction for a gross insult offered to him by the people of Commendah, whom Mr. Bowdich's treaty placed under the protection of the governor. It appeared that the king, as is customary with these people on such occasions, had sent, from his camp at Gaman,

some jaw-bones to the Commendahs, as trophies of success. His messengers were received by them with insult, were beaten and ejected from the town, and now, in virtue of the treaty, he applied to the governor for redress. The latter refused to interfere, and the messengers returned disappointed to Coomassie.

Another messenger soon after arrived, reiterating the demand for redress from the Commendahs, and adding that, in the event of its being denied him, it was the intention of the king to take the affair into his own hands, and to punish the offenders without reference to the governor; and that, for this purpose, a body of troops would be sent down from Coomassie. The governor received this message very indignantly, and, by way of expressing his defiance, he delivered to the messenger a ball-cartridge as symbolical of his readiness for war. He moreover encouraged the towns-people to place themselves in a posture of defence.

The news of these proceedings reached the king in his camp at Gaman. He would not believe the report of his messenger, and put him to the torture; but his captains were not so incredulous, and eagerly requested permission to go down to the coast and avenge their insulted dignity. But

the king would not consent to this. He believed that the governor had been imposed upon, for he could not reconcile the conduct reported of him with his ideas of British good faith. The ink of the treaty was scarcely dry which had expressly stipulated that the king, in the event of any aggression on the part of the natives under British protection, was to seek redress through the governor. He had done so, and without the slightest intention of giving offence. He appeased the anger of his captains by promising to exact immediate redress, and, with this view, he dispatched another messenger of high rank, with a numerous retinue.

On his arrival, he was publicly received in the hall of the castle, in presence of the head men of Cape Coast. He once more, in the name of his sovereign, demanded redress from the governor by virtue of the treaty, which he produced from a box and handed to his excellency, desiring that it might be publicly read; and he added that he had his master's instructions to leave the treaty with the governor, if he should still refuse to abide by its provisions, as the king could not retain it, and go to war. As the reading of the treaty was being proceeded with, the messenger twice rose up, and demanded satisfaction upon the faith of

the fourth and seventh articles, which provide as follow:

"4th. In order to avert the horrors of war, it is agreed, that in any case of aggression on the part of the natives under British protection, the king shall complain thereof to the governor-in-chief to obtain redress, and that he will in no case resort to hostility, without endeavouring as much as possible to effect an amicable arrangement.

"7th. The governors of the respective forts shall, at all times, afford every protection in their power to the persons and property of the people of Ashantee, who may resort to the water-side."

With skilful tact and telling effect, this Ashantee diplomatist laid hold upon these articles as they were consecutively read; and his representations were loudly enforced by the acclamations of his attendants. The Cape Coast people now took the alarm, and threw all the blame upon the governor, who had encouraged them in their rebellious conduct. The messenger would listen to no explanations. The king's orders were peremptory. Ample redress must be granted, or the treaty would be left with the governor, and an appeal made to arms.

Mr. Dupuis, the consul, was present on this occasion. From the time of his arrival upon the

coast, there had been constant misunderstandings between him and the local government. These, and the unsettled state of the country, had occasioned the delay of his journey to Coomassie. It would appear that the governor looked with much jealousy upon Mr. Dupuis' independent appointment, and was reluctant to allow him to proceed to Ashantee. Their views of the politics of the country were so different, that the governor did not think it safe to allow him to enter upon his duties; while the ideas of each, with regard to their respective powers, occasioned so much clashing that their intercourse assumed the character of personal hostility. We believe that much of the present misunderstanding with Ashantee arose out of this bitterness of spirit; and we cannot but regard the appointment of Mr. Dupuis as very impolitic, inasmuch as it greatly impaired the governor's authority in the eyes of the Ashantees, and destroyed that unity of purpose and of action which it was so essential to exhibit. It may be thought that the fault was in the men, and not in the policy of the appointment; but our relations on the Gold Coast with the King of Ashantee, bring the governor into such constant communication with him, that it is scarcely possible to

avoid misunderstandings, if our political agent at Coomassie be not subject to the governor's control.

While the Ashantee messenger was pressing his demands for redress, Mr. Dupuis desired that he might be informed of the nature of his appointment. When this was done, the messenger seemed to think that such an unexpected circumstance as the arrival of an agent direct from England, might alter the king's views. He therefore, after a little consideration, resolved to retain possession of the treaty in the meantime, and to apply to the king for fresh instructions. Some time afterwards, an ambassador of still higher consequence made his appearance at Cape Coast. He was a prince of the blood, a nephew of the king. He had with him an imposing train of twelve hundred attendants. He made his entry into Cape Coast as a viceroy enters a conquered town, with the greatest pomp and state. He denounced the Cape Coast people as rebels; and demanded sixteen hundred ounces of gold as a fine. He also demanded a similar sum from the governor, for his infringement of the treaty.

Every attempt at negotiation having failed, it was at length resolved to forward Mr. Dupuis to Coomassie. The governor added several valuable

presents to those which Mr. Dupuis had brought from England for the king. He also provided him with instructions, but these the consul left behind him, to be returned with a protest when he should have advanced so far upon his journey as to be beyond reach. Little good could be expected from such ill-combined efforts. Mr. Dupuis was well received by the king, who seemed willing to adjust the differences, without having recourse to war. He departed from his demand upon the government, but would not remit the fine which he wished to impose upon the town of Cape Coast. A new treaty was drawn up, which acknowledged the king's sovereignty over Fantee. It was stipulated that the natives under British protection should be amenable only to the governor for their acts, but the king reserved to himself the right of punishing the Cape Coast people. His majesty also agreed to receive English missionaries for the purpose of propagating the Christian religion.

On the consul's return to the coast, the king sent ambassadors for transmission to England with presents to the Prince Regent, for the purpose of showing his friendly disposition, and of promoting those feelings of amity which he evidently appeared anxious should subsist between himself and

the English government upon the coast. But his well-meaning courtesy was doomed to receive a rude rebuff. The local government, relying upon assistance from Sir George Collier, the naval commander-in-chief upon the coast, disavowed the treaty negotiated by Mr. Dupuis. They also refused to continue the payment of the ground-rent for the forts, as well as to entertain the question of satisfaction demanded from the people of Cape Coast. The commodore, moreover, declined giving a passage to the Ashantee ambassadors. Mr. Dupuis having explained the state of matters to these, and protested against the acts of the government, returned to England, to submit his proceedings to the ministers of the crown.

The perusal of these unvarnished details fills the mind with a feeling of great disappointment at the unworthy part which we appear to have acted throughout these events. Bowdich's treaty imposed upon the governor the necessity of entertaining the king's just complaints. The insult offered to his ambassadors to Commendah was, in every respect, a just ground of complaint. Not only was it an assault, but an assault of a very aggravated nature—the violation of the sacred persons of accredited messengers whom tribes at war with each other consider it a duty to respect.

But more, they were deputed to show the trophies of the king's victorious arms, and meant, no doubt, to remind the Commendahs of the mercy which had spared them on a former occasion. The jaw-bones of the king's enemies were intended to convey a fearful lesson of obedience, in accordance with the figurative language of savages, which seeks to impress the mind with objects calculated to strike the outward senses rather than to waste time in wordy argument. When Amanquah gained his victory over the Akïms, he sent jaw-bones to the Accras, who were at the time subject to the king. There was, therefore, nothing insulting in the medium of communication, which was well understood by the Commendahs. The insult to the messengers was consequently nothing less than an act of rebellion against the king, who sought redress in the manner prescribed by the treaty.

We are at a loss to understand by what subterfuge the governor could justify himself in evading his duty on such an occasion, which was clearly, by every obligation of honour and good faith, and even of good policy, to mediate between the king and his rebellious subjects. It may be, that the bearing of the king's messengers was more imperious than the haughty spirit of an Englishman

could easily brook; but the whole conduct of the king evinces a calm and temperate assertion of his just demands, and a disinclination to have recourse to arms. His repeated messages, to which he gave a continually increasing importance by the increased rank and consequence of each successive deputy; his firm remonstrances, based upon the articles of the treaty; his avowed determination of the course which his dignity compelled him to take to vindicate his honour; and more than all, his sacred regard for his engagements, which would not allow him to follow the natural impulse of his mind while he kept possession of the treaty, are proofs of an open, direct course of dealing, which forms a lofty contrast to the evasive conduct of the governor and people.

The only palliation which ingenuity can devise to extenuate their proceedings, is their impression of the intolerable nature of Ashantee domination. They doubtless regarded the communication made to the Commendahs, as artfully contrived to bring on a palaver, and believed that there would be no end to similar snares. The supposed disasters of the Gaman war presented a favourable opportunity of throwing off the yoke, and good faith was sacrificed to their views of policy. It is humi-

liating to be compelled to make this admission, and to confess that a king of Ashantee had greater regard for his written engagements than an English governor.

But the policy was as short-sighted as it was perfidious. The king's authority was fully established throughout the country. The Assins and Abrahs were, at this time, his obedient vassals, and without being able to detach them from their allegiance, the assertion of independence on the part of the Cape Coast people was nothing but the angry pettishness of a froward child. If measures had been taken to organize a systematic revolt throughout the different Fantee tribes, the hope of independence might excuse the natives, while it would not justify the governor, who, by a written treaty, which the king had not violated had acknowledged their subjection, and had avowedly testified this acknowledgment by the assignment to the king, with the assent of the Cape Coast people, of the pay-notes given by the government.

But for the change which soon afterwards took place in the construction of the government, upon which no calculation could be formed at the time, the assertion of the independence of Cape Coast was a project of perfect insanity. We fear

we must look for a solution of the infatuation in Mr. Dupuis' appointment, and in the aggravations which his opposition added to the question. He is far from an unprejudiced authority, and he does not scruple to charge the local government with the determination to risk a rupture with Ashantee, to defeat the objects of his mission. But, putting his prejudices, and the intemperance of his conduct, out of view, we are still left to contend against a mass of obstinate facts, which no sophistry can remove. Can we hesitate to attribute the disavowal of his treaty, the withdrawal of a proposal to satisfy the king's demands upon Cape Coast, by the payment of a fine of one hundred and fifty ounces of gold, the refusal to acknowledge the king's right to the pay-notes, and the contumelious rejection of his ambassadors, to the indignity offered to the governor in the renunciation of his instructions by the consul? It is evident that personal pique was allowed to outweigh public considerations, and to confirm the local government in its measures of resistance.

It is not difficult to conceive with what feelings of offended pride the king saw the ambassadors intended for England, return to Coomassie, and learnt the fate of the new treaty which he had concluded. Still, however, he refrained from

having recourse to hostilities. Mr. Dupuis had sent him word, that he intended to lay the whole question before the home government, and he patiently waited to know the result of this reference. But when several months had elapsed beyond the time prescribed for the transmission of an answer, his ambassador, Prince Adoom, received instructions to retire from Cape Coast and to place it in a state of blockade.

In the meantime, the king's captains, in different parts of the country, were carrying on a system of confiscations and spoliation, the oppressiveness of which had no doubt much influence with the governor in inducing him to believe the country ripe for revolt. In April, 1820, immediately after the conclusion of the treaty with Dupuis, the king sent messengers to Accra to demand the sum of two hundred ounces of gold from Mr. Hanson, a native merchant, upon the plea that he had been unfriendly to him, in not sending him a present when he was going to war. Such a preposterous demand was of course resisted, but the mere fact of the attempted imposition will best show the nature of his oppressive rule, where it could be carried on without the power of resistance.

While Prince Adoom kept up the blockade of Cape Coast, he at the same time exercised a

species of jurisdiction over the neighbouring chiefs. A dispute having arisen between two of these, Paintrie, chief of Abrah, was summoned by the Ashantee resident to repair to Mouree to have it adjusted. While there, he obtained possession of the person of one of his own slaves, who had absconded to Cape Coast. This slave took up his residence with one of the soldiers of the castle; but having quarrelled with his protector, the latter, in a spirit of revenge, agreed to send him to his master, Paintrie, for a trifling gratification. He was gagged and conveyed by canoe to Mouree at night, and barbarously butchered by the chief. In consequence of this outrage, a party of eighty-five soldiers under the command of Mr. Colliver was immediately sent off to endeavour to bring Paintrie to Cape Coast. On approaching the town, they were attacked by the Fantees. They returned the fire, and put the enemy to flight, killing eleven and wounding many more. Paintrie's body was found among the slain, and was carried to Cape Coast for burial.

Such scenes will convey to the reader some idea of the violence prevalent at this time. The trade of Cape Coast was entirely cut off, and the people, hemmed in within the precints of the town, were dependant for supplies upon communication by sea.

While affairs upon the Gold Coast were in this unsatisfactory position, a bill was passed through the English Parliament in 1821, for abolishing the African Company, and transferring the forts and settlements to the crown. The Gold Coast became a dependency of Sierra Leone, and was placed under the government of Sir Charles M'Carthy. He arrived at Cape Coast Castle in March, 1822, and gave life and energy to the drooping spirits of the people. It does not appear that he made any attempts to establish amicable relations with the king. He seems to have at once assumed (no doubt influenced by the representations made to him) that negotiation was hopeless, that he had to do with a state of confirmed hostility, and that there was no other way of establishing peace except by the sword. There is now good reason for believing that the king, at this time, would have been willing to listen to terms of accommodation, and it is to be regretted that Sir Charles did not at first make overtures of this nature. But he had no ordinary difficulties to contend against. The servants of the African Company, almost to a man, refused to take office under him, and withdrew themselves from any participation in the management of affairs.

The new governor was thus left to grope his

way as he best could, exposed to the machinations of interested and designing men. His noble and generous nature sympathised deeply with the sufferings of the oppressed Fantees, and led him to conclude that their independence alone could give them relief, and restore tranquillity to this long-distracted country. His measures, therefore, were all calculated to this end. He had frequent intercourse with the most influential chiefs. He laid before them his views of the policy which he desired them to adopt. He endeavoured to give unanimity and decision to their counsels, and assisted them largely with all the munitions of war. So thoroughly did he identify himself with the struggle, that the Fantees soon hailed him as their deliverer, and gave themselves entirely up to his guidance.

During this time, the King of Ashantee maintained a sullen silence. He saw with feelings of deep indignation the seeds of revolt, thus eagerly cherished by the English governor. His pride was hurt at the great indifference with which he was treated. No embassy, no conciliatory message had been sent to him. He was left to brood over his insulted dignity, and to meditate his schemes of retaliation and revenge. Impressed, however, with the danger of the contest, from the extra-

ordinary enthusiasm with which Sir Charles's policy had been adopted by his revolted Fantees, he was slow to commence hostilities. The governor attributing his inactivity to fear, and conceiving that he had awed him into submission, did not consider his presence longer necessary upon the Gold Coast, and returned to the seat of his government at Sierra Leone.

The king, availing himself of his absence, made preparations for war, but so secretly, that his intentions did not transpire until his plans were fully matured. During this time Ashantee traders were in the habit of visiting the coast, but they maintained an inviolable secrecy regarding events in Ashantee, having had the oath draught administered to them for this purpose before leaving Coomassie. One of these traders having quarrelled with a black sergeant stationed at Anamaboe Fort, the latter, in the heat of his passion, grossly abused the king. This circumstance was made the pretext for commencing hostilities. The sergeant was waylaid and carried to Doonquah, the capital of Abrah, whose chief, Paintrie, had been killed by the English soldiers in the skirmish at Mouree.

The Abrahs were, at this time, acting under the influence of the Ashantee resident, and were, no doubt, willing to retaliate upon the English sergeant

the death of their chief. This outrage, indicating as it did the near approach of war, hurried Sir Charles M'Carthy back to Cape Coast, where his presence was hailed with the most extravagant expressions of delight. His majestic figure, towering a foot beyond the tallest of his staff, as he passed along the ranks, smiling encouragement to all ; his frank, courteous, and gallant bearing ; his lavish, almost reckless, expenditure of money ; and his unshaken confidence in the result of the impending struggle, inspired all ranks of society with the most enthusiastic and flattering anticipations.

Even at this distance of time, it is astonishing to observe the effect of the mention of his name, which seems to act as a potent spell with the Fantees. Anecdotes of his power, generosity, and benevolence, are treasured up with a species of sacred regard, and transmitted from father to son. The very spots where he had given a few pic-nic parties with all the *éclat* of rich English uniforms, and a military band, are still pointed out with a lingering fondness, while his name is perpetuated in the corrupted form of Karté bestowed by many a parent upon his child.

Captain Laing volunteered to proceed to Doonquah, or even to Coomassie, to negotiate for the delivery of the abducted sergeant, who was soon

afterwards butchered; but Sir Charles declined his proposal. The king also made overtures of peace, through the Dutch governor, which were equally rejected. Indeed, it is evident, that the governor had made up his mind to crush the Ashantee power, for which the present enthusiastic temper of the people appeared to afford so favourable an opportunity. With the view of preventing the inroads of the Ashantees, it was thought fit to push forward the native forces upon the two principal lines of access to the coast. Major Chisholm, with the main body, took up his position near the Prah at Ahponsahsoo; while Captain Laing, with a smaller force, proceeded farther eastward in the direction of Essacoomah. It was at this point that the Ashantees first made their appearance. Captain Laing, in several skirmishes, gained a decided advantage over them, and effectually checked their march.

In the meantime, camps were formed at Djuquah and Insoo-ekil, for the protection of Cape Coast. Sir Charles was at the former place, when he received intelligence of the advance of a large body of the enemy through Wassaw. They had defeated Cudjoe Cheboo, the chief of Denkera, who had deserted the king, and joined the allies, and were now pursuing him and a large body of

the Wassaws in the direction of the coast. Sir Charles no sooner received this information, than he broke up his encampment, and set forward to join Cheboo. He had with him only about five hundred men, composed of the Cape Coast militia and native auxiliaries. He did not even wait for a junction of his forces with Major Chisholm; but rushed headlong to meet the enemy, of whom it is clear that he had formed a very erroneous estimate. He crossed the Prah, and arrived at the encampment of Cheboo, the Denkera chief, which was upon the banks of a small tributary stream, near the village of Essamacow. He immediately prepared to receive the Ashantees, who were reported to be advancing to give battle. The sound of their horns was soon distinguished, and was answered by the English bugles playing "God save the King."

Sir Charles had been led to believe that some of the Ashantee chiefs were inclined to join him; but he was soon painfully disabused of this idea, by the very spirited manner in which they commenced the attack. They were met with equal gallantry, and a most obstinate engagement took place. After some time, the fire of the Ashantees began to slacken, which excited hopes of their speedy overthrow; but their defeat was averted by

a most unpardonable oversight on the part of the commissariat officers, who had carelessly substituted kegs of provisions for ammunition, which failed the governor at this critical moment. The Ashantees, taking advantage of the cessation of the English fire, pushed boldly across the river; but they were received by the bayonet, and driven back with great loss. The relief gained by this repulse was only momentary. Another large body of the Ashantees now arrived upon the field. They attacked the governor's forces in the flank and rear, and cut them to pieces. The governor and his officers made their way to that part of the field where Cheboo still maintained an obstinate fight. Sir Charles had received several wounds during the engagement; but he still endeavoured to encourage the Denkera chief to continue the fight. But it was hopeless. The Ashantees pressed round on every side, and forced the Denkeras to flight.

The governor and his officers still remained at bay, determined to sell their lives as dearly as possible. Mr. Williams, the secretary, received a shot, which deprived him for a time of all consciousness. He was brought to his senses by the bungling attempt of an Ashantee to cut off his head. An incision had actually been made in the back part of his neck, when he was recognised by an

Ashantee captain, who commanded his life to be spared in gratitude for some act of kindness which Mr. Williams had formerly had an opportunity of showing him. But he was greatly shocked to perceive the headless trunks of Sir Charles, Mr. Buckle, and Mr. Wetherall, upon the ground beside him.

Captain Ricketts and Mr. de Graft, the interpreter escaped through the forest, and reached Major Chisholm, then on his march from Ahpon-sahsoo to join the governor. The news of the governor's defeat and death, gave entirely a new character to the position of affairs, and induced Major Chisholm to concentrate his forces in the neighbourhood of Cape Coast. He therefore made a retrograde movement in that direction, while Captain Laing also retired from Essacoomah. Such was the result of the fatal battle of Essamacow, which was fought on the 21st of January, 1824.

While we cannot withhold our admiration from the gallant daring displayed by the governor upon this occasion, we are compelled to admit, that there was a reckless precipitancy, and a total want of those prudential measures which are so essential to the success of military operations in a country like the Gold Coast, which is so densely covered with forest and jungle, as almost to preclude the

possibility of obtaining a thorough knowledge of the movements and relative position of an enemy.

Had the governor, by means of scouts, taken time to inform himself of the strength and position of the different Ashantee divisions, he would scarcely have hazarded a battle at the time he did. While Major Chisholm was in camp at Ahpon-sahsoo, he sent out Mr. Henry Barnes, with a small scouting party, to endeavour to obtain some certain information of the Ashantee army, which was known to be somewhere in the neighbourhood. After some hours of careful inspection, they at last heard the confused hum of a multitude, and on clambering to the top of some rocks, which overhang the Prah, they perceived (while they themselves remained concealed among the thick undergrowth of the trees and shrubs) the Ashantee forces encamped on the opposite side of the river. They could plainly perceive every movement in the enemy's camp, which was regularly formed into lanes and streets, and composed of comfortable tents, made of wattlings, and covered with the green branches of the palm-tree.

Having fully reconnoitred the Ashantees, all unconscious of their presence, and being strongly tempted, from their unsuspecting and unguarded

position, to give them an alarm, they poured three volleys into the camp; and then exposing their red jackets to the view of the enemy, gave a loud and hearty cheer. In an instant, all was confusion in the camp, and such was the precipitation with which they fled, that they left much of their valuables and baggage behind, which fell into the hands of Major Chisholm's force the next day. The panic-struck Ashantees continued their march, or rather flight, along the bank of the river, with the view of joining the other division of the army in Wassaw, and were thus brought upon Sir Charles's flank and rear, during the action at Essamacow, and at the very time that he had repulsed the Ashantees in front at the point of the bayonet.

It would thus appear, that the alarm given to the Ashantee camp was the principal cause of Sir Charles's defeat. If, instead of giving the alarm, the scouting party had returned, and cautiously led Major Chisholm's division to the attack of the Ashantee camp, and had the latter improved the consternation into which the enemy would, without doubt, have been thrown, by a hot and unflinching pursuit, it is evident that the Ashantees would then have been enclosed between the two divisions of the Fantees, and have become an easy prey

to them. Such is the view of the matter, which we are enabled to take, after being fully made aware of the position of the different forces; and such, we conceive, it was possible to have taken at the time, had sufficient attention been paid to maintain, by means of scouts, a perfect acquaintance with their relative positions. The disaster of Essamacow must, we fear, be attributed to Sir Charles's contempt for the nature of the force opposed to him.

The accounts of his defeat and death cast a gloom over every class of society proportionate to the victorious anticipations which had been so confidently cherished. The Ashantees, however, although still fifteen thousand strong, and elate with victory, did not show any eagerness to improve it. On the contrary, they made overtures for peace, through Sir Frederick Last, the Dutch governor. A conference was held at Elmina, Captain Ricketts attending on the part of the English governor to conduct the negotiations. The Ashantee deputies affirmed that it was no part of the king's intention to make war upon the whites. The object of the Ashantee general was to obtain possession of the revolted chiefs of Denkera and Wassaw, especially the former, whom he was determined to capture, even if he should find an asylum within the walls

of Cape Coast Castle. He also disowned the murder of the black sergeant at Doonquah, which had been committed by the Fantees, then on the side of the Ashantees.

The only result of this conference was the liberation of Mr. Williams, the secretary, who had been kept a prisoner in the Ashantee camp since the day of the battle. The Dutch governor prevailed upon the deputies to deliver him up, as the readiest way to establish a better feeling. He was led naked into Elmina, and given over to Governor Last. During his captivity, he had been treated with great barbarity. He was locked up every night in a room with the heads of Sir Charles and his brother officers, which had undergone some preparation to preserve them from decay. A fellow-prisoner, Captain Raydon, had been offered up a sacrifice to the Fetish. It was also stated that the Ashantee captains had taken out Sir Charles's heart, which was eaten in the expectation of deriving from it a portion of his indomitable courage. His flesh was also preserved, and hung upon their persons, as a charm to shield them in battle.

The principal cause of the failure of the negotiations was the alarm which Cudjoe Cheboo had of being delivered up to the Ashantees as a peace-

offering. Colonel Torrane's conduct in the affair of Assin Cheboo had not been forgotten, and nothing could convince the chief of Denkera that a similar fate did not await him. He therefore kept the field, bravely determining to fight to the last.

On the 2nd of April, the army under Major Chisholm retreated from the Prah; Commendah Fort was evacuated, and measures were taken to meet the Ashantees once more in the field. Cudjoe Cheboo attacked them on the 25th at Dompim. Neither party obtained great advantage in this affair, but it had the effect of inspiring the Fantees with new hopes. They made preparations for another battle with redoubled energy, and had the good fortune to defeat the Ashantees, in a stern engagement, which took place at Affetoo on the 21st of May. Had the whole of the Fantee force upon this occasion seconded the extraordinary efforts of Cheboo, and followed up their victory with sufficient vigour, the Ashantees would have been totally destroyed. But many of the Fantees, frightened at their own success, fairly fled in the moment of victory; and to such an extent was this desertion carried, that on mustering the force the day after the battle, more than one half had decamped either during the contest or after their victory.

These gallant warriors seemed to have been inspired with somewhat of Macbeth's fears:

> "I am afraid to think what I have done—
> Look on 't again, I dare not."

This wholesale desertion rendered the advantage gained perfectly fruitless, and obliged the English to concentrate their forces around the town of Cape Coast. The Ashantees, who had been joined by the king in person, by no means discouraged by their recent defeat, pressed close upon the retreating army, and encamped within sight of the towers which protect the town. The English now learned for the first time that Sai Tootoo Quamina was no more. He had died at the commencement of the present hostilities, and was succeeded by Sai Ockoto, his brother. It was this monarch who now erected his pavilion within sight of Cape Coast, waiting for a favourable opportunity to attack the lines.

During the time that the Ashantees remained in this situation, they found such a steady and effectual opposition made to all their attempts upon the lines, that they sent to seek counsel of the Elminas, who had maintained a friendly communication with them during the whole of the war. Their advice was, to dress a portion of their

army in the same manner as Cudjoe Cheboo's people, who were in the English ranks, and to introduce them into the town under the cover of night, as apparently a part of Cheboo's men. They were then to fire the town, and while the distracted inhabitants were running about in the confusion which was likely to ensue, a general attack was to be made by the whole of the Ashantee army.

Colonel Sutherland, who had lately arrived to take the command, having been informed by Mr. Williams of this artifice, without giving any notice to the Cape Coast people, who he well knew would strongly oppose the destruction of their town, set it on fire, in broad day, by means of rockets, in a hundred places; and the smoke arising from the burning houses, which the Ashantees had resolved to consign to flames that night, announced to them the stern determination of the English, and the impossibility of fulfilling their expectations.

On the 11th of July, a furious attack was made upon the lines by the whole of the Ashantee force, which was most signally repulsed; and on the 13th, a stray ball fired from one of the guns on Smith's tower having accidentally struck the king's palanquin, led immediately to the retreat of the Ashantees. The king believed that the

white men had a perfect knowledge of the whereabouts of his basket, and that the ball had come expressly commissioned to extinguish his life; and not only did this alarm cling to him when within sight of the towers, but for many miles of his retreat he trudged along on foot, nor could the representations of his captains induce him to make use of his palanquin, which, he felt convinced, would again become a target for the white men, as soon as they knew (which he believed they would do intuitively) that his person was in it.

He was now anxious to return to his capital. Small-pox had broken out in his army, which was also suffering from want of provisions. The Ashantees, however, did not approve of the king's retreat. A spirited lady belonging to his family, sent to him, as he was retracing his steps, a musical instrument only used by females, and begged that his majesty would henceforth make use of it, and give her in exchange the sword, which he was incapable of wearing without dishonour. This taunt, added to numerous other representations, induced him once more to gird his loins for battle. His operations, however, were principally directed against the helpless and unprotected natives of the inland villages, whom he continued to pillage and oppress until August,

1826. At that time he concentrated his whole force behind Accra (his former visit to Cape Coast having, no doubt, satisfied him of the impracticability of his attacks in that quarter) and made every demonstration that a decisive effort was at hand.

The English, with their allies, prepared to meet him in this new field, and rejoiced that a trial of strength and military skill was to take place in an open country. On the 26th of August was fought the decisive battle of Dŏodowah, in which the Ashantee army was completely overthrown; and the remnant, with their king, who had escaped destruction, preferred, in this dilemma, to encounter the ribald songs and abuse of their women rather than the avengers of the defeat of Essamacow.

In this action, the Ashantees fought with the most determined bravery, and at one portion of the day fortune seemed to incline to their side. The native ranks under the command of the English, at one time wavered, and were on the point of running away; when Major Purdon shamed them into renewed exertions, by expressing his firm determination never to leave the field except as conqueror. New life was infused into their broken ranks—new courage into their

drooping spirits. One last, one crowning effort was made, and was answered by the complete destruction of the Ashantee army. Several females of the royal family were taken prisoners, and much gold, and other valuable spoil, fell into the hands of the allies. Cheboo, chief of Denkera, and Cheboo Coomah of Assin, another revolted Ashantee chief, contributed greatly to the success of the day. The latter was at the time a mere stripling, but he displayed a gallantry and a determination worthy of an old warrior.

The Danish government upon the coast also assisted upon this occasion, but the auxiliaries whom they brought into the field did little service, having taken to flight early in the day. Messrs. Bannerman and Hanson, two native merchants of Accra, equipped a militia force at their own expense, and these, having been trained to the use of their arms, formed a very efficient support. The victory was in a great measure owing to the use of Congreve rockets, which, in addition to the actual injury inflicted by them on the enemy, created among them a superstitious awe and dread, which greatly repressed their accustomed hardihood. The openness of the field of battle also, which precluded the adoption of bush-fighting, at which the Ashantees are so expert, greatly concurred to

their overthrow. In short, this action clearly demonstrated that the Ashantees, with all their acknowledged bravery, are, in a fair field, no match for an enemy greatly inferior in point of courage and endurance, when officered by Europeans, and conducted by European tactics.

Sir Neil Campbell arrived to take charge of the government immediately after the action, and perhaps it is partly owing to his having lost the *éclat* of this concluding triumph, that we are to attribute the contemplated abandonment of the settlements. He wished the allies to consent to terms of peace, but found it impossible to bring them to any agreement upon the subject.

Some time after he had taken his departure for Sierra Leone, Captain Ricketts, with the consent of the allies, succeeded in opening a negotiation; but several years elapsed before the terms could finally be agreed upon.

CHAPTER VII.

The English Government resolves to abandon the Gold Coast settlements—Parliamentary grant—Formation of African Committee and of the Local Government — Mr. George Maclean appointed Governor—State of the country—Character of Mr. Maclean—Treaty of peace concluded—The Governor leads an expedition—Arrival of a Christian Missionary upon the Coast—Punishment of Cudjoe Cheboo for offering human sacrifices — Clamour against the Governor—Our position in the country with reference to slavery—Dr. Madden appointed Commissioner—The settlements placed under the immediate direction of the Crown — Commander Hill appointed Governor, and Mr. Maclean Judicial Assessor—Encroachments of the King of Ashantee — Commander Winniett visits the Kings of Dahomey and Ashantee—An officer left to settle the affairs of Appollonia—Peace established—Purchase of the Danish settlements — Death of Governor Winniett — Major Hill appointed Governor—Imposition of a poll-tax.

HAVING thus brought the Ashantee war to a conclusion, and avenged the defeat of Essamacow,

the English government came to the resolution of abandoning our settlements on the Gold Coast. The heavy disasters of the war, and the great and lavish expenditure attending it, had sickened our rulers with our African possessions, and made them anxious to retire from the country, now that they could do so, without incurring the imputation of a dastardly flight.

A brig of war was sent out for the purpose of removing the merchants and their property, and Major Ricketts, the officer in charge, received instructions to abandon and destroy the forts. This intelligence arriving at a time when the English residents, as well as the natives, were elate with their victory over the Ashantees, created a sensation of the deepest sorrow. The merchants had too much at stake ever to dream of abandoning their houses and their trade. They had calculated the risks of carrying on business in such a country before embarking in it, and they did not feel inclined now to forego the advantages which seemed likely to arise from the defeat of the Ashantees. Moreover, the abandonment of their business, with the heavy liabilities which they had in England, appeared nothing else than a cowardly desertion of their duty, equally repugnant to

honour and to interest. Neither did they regard their position as so hopeless. They were aware that the natives were too sensible of the advantage of having English merchants resident in the country to force them to fly from it, on account of their exactions; and that, whether the Ashantees or Fantees became masters, they would be equally protected by their views of self-interest. Nay, they were not without hopes of being able to acquire for themselves an influential position in the direction of the affairs of the country.

Captain Ricketts seeing them in this hopeful and resolute spirit, and feeling the cruelty of leaving the Fantees at such a time in so forlorn a condition, hesitated to carry his instructions into effect. He supported the representations of the residents to the home government, which being backed by the merchants in England, connected with the African trade, had the effect of averting the blow. A middle course was adopted, which relieved the government from the troublesome affairs of the Gold Coast, and, at the same time, gave its countenance and a slight pecuniary assistance to the merchants for their protection. A parliamentary grant of £4,000 was obtained, in order to enable them to maintain the forts of

Cape Coast Castle and Accra, and a code of regulations was drawn up, under the sanction of the Colonial Office, for the government.

A committee of three London merchants, with a secretary—the latter alone being paid—was entrusted with the direction of the affairs of the forts. All the correspondence from the coast was to be addressed to this committee, who undertook the surveillance of the expenditure of the grant, and the appointment of the officials. The establisment was to consist of a governor, his secretary, a surgeon, an officer of a guard of one hundred men, and a commandant for the fort at Accra. Part of the grant, after the payment of the salaries of the officials, was to be appropriated to the maintenance of a school, part to fort repairs, and the remainder in pay and presents to the Fantee chiefs. A council of merchants, presided over by the governor, was appointed to assist him in the administration.

Such was the humble provision made to replace the very expensive scale of the late establishments, and from such insignificant means have our settlements on the coast become instrumental in giving peace and the advantages of good government to this long distracted country.

The merchants of Cape Coast Castle, pending

these arrangements, had formed themselves into a council of government, and had continued to conduct the affairs of the country as if still enjoying the sanction and full concurrence of the home government. It was scarcely known among the natives generally how nearly the link had been severed that connected them with England, and gave them assurance of protection.

Mr. John Jackson was chosen president. He had been an officer in the service during the government of the former African Committee, was therefore well acquainted with the state of affairs in the country, and, from his great experience, was fully qualified to administer the government. The new committee in London offered to confirm him in the appointment, but he agreed with the other merchants in thinking that it would be better to have an officer at the head of affairs in no way connected with trade. They felt, however, that it was an office requiring a rare combination of qualities in the man who held it; and Mr. Jackson only waived his claim to it in the hope of being able to obtain the services of a gentleman, whom the merchants unanimously agreed in considering perfectly competent for the appointment.

Mr. George Maclean, an officer in the African corps, had accompanied Colonel Lumley to the

Gold Coast in 1826, in the capacity of military secretary. His great abilities had recommended him particularly to the notice of the merchants, and their thoughts now turned to him as the fittest person to be their governor. They petitioned the government to this effect; and Mr. Maclean, being willing to accept the appointment, proceeded to the Gold Coast in 1830.

Before his arrival, little had been done to restore general order and tranquillity since the defeat of the Ashantees. It had been so complete, and had impressed them so strongly with their own inferiority and the power and resources of the English, that they had not dared to renew hostilities. They were still digesting the defeat of Doodowah, in an attitude of sullen defiance, while the Fantees, ever in the extreme of hopeless dejection or arrogant assumption, were singing in derision their peæns of triumph.

They still maintained their old grudge against the Elminas, who, true to the former policy, continued in close alliance with the Ashantees during the late war. The Fantees had not yet renounced the hope of being able to retaliate upon them the miseries which they themselves had suffered; and now that their powerful ally was no longer omnipotent in Fantee, they embraced the opportunity

to make another attack upon Elmina. All Mr. Jackson's remonstrances to dissuade them from this course were of no avail. He could not even prevent a body of militia, in the pay of the government, from joining their countrymen. As might have been expected from this crude and ill-concerted expedition, it was perfectly abortive. The Fantees, after a feeble attack, were repulsed on all sides; and scared by the guns of the castle and St. Jago, made a most precipitate flight.

Mr. Maclean arrived soon after this disgraceful affair, and assumed the reins of government. The prospect before him was anything but cheering. With a rankling hatred still subsisting between the Fantees and the Elminas, with our intercourse with the interior cut off, our trade annihilated, our allies fighting and squabbling with each other, and our authority so limited as scarcely to be any protection to the oppressed: the contemplation of his arduous duty, was sufficient to stagger an ordinary mind. But he was exactly the man suited for successfully struggling against such difficulties; and happy was it for the Gold Coast, that its destinies were confided to such a man, at such a time; and that he should have continued for a period of seventeen years to exercise authority over the people, without any interruption to the system

which he had introduced. Calm and deliberate in forming a judgment, and carefully canvassing in his own mind all the bearings of every subject under review, his caution in coming to a conclusion appeared to a superficial observer to amount almost to timidity.

He listened with attention to, and courted the discussion of, every argument, which could be adduced on both sides of a question; not with the intention of adopting the views of either disputant, but of quietly storing his mind with all its *pros* and *cons*, and of afterwards submitting them to the ordeal of private rumination. Opinions thus formed, became a portion of his faith, which it was next to impossible to shake. In proportion to the strength of his conviction, was the decision which he displayed in carrying out his resolutions. Once fully satisfied that the course which he was pursuing was morally correct, and that he was adopting measures most likely to lead eventually to beneficial results, he shrank from no difficulty in the path.

Endowed with an extraordinary degree of moral courage, and with a persevering firmness which failures never daunted, he steadily prosecuted his schemes, convinced that sooner or later the result would answer his expectations; for he had a most

abiding belief in the overruling direction of Providence. While enemies were maligning his conduct, blackening his fame, and attributing motives and actions to him which his heart had never conceived, strong in conscious rectitude, his constant reply to his anxious friends was: "I assure you, this gives me no uneasiness at all; sooner or later the truth will appear, and God would never permit such wickedness to prosper." And in this belief he reposed with a careless indifference, which others less interested than himself found much difficulty in practising.

The same feeling gave rise to the converse idea, also firmly implanted in his mind, that a good object, undertaken from pure and disinterested motives, and prosecuted without injustice, would be crowned with success.

It will be easily perceived, how invaluable this disposition was to a person intrusted with the government of such a country as the Gold Coast at that time. It rendered him insensible to difficulties, which would have appalled a weaker mind, and led him to undertake measures which to ordinary men would have seemed to require the slow process of time and progressive civilisation. He thus jumped to difficult results; and prudently fortifying his new position, and firmly

holding every inch of ground which he had gained, prepared for another step. The strongholds of iniquity, which had refused the impress of a single ameliorating influence for ages, were thus captured by a series of skilful *coups de main*, and an opening made for the introduction of a new and better *régime*.

By never allowing himself to be foiled in any measure, but by resolutely persevering towards the desired object, regardless of temporary obstructions and delays, every new enterprize carried with it the *prestige* of his never-failing success, until, at last, throughout the length and breadth of the land, his fiat became as irrevocable as the laws of the Medes and Persians.

On his first arrival in the country, his health was in a very weak state, arising from a serious accident which occurred some time before leaving England. This perhaps, as well as an idea of the necessity of maintaining a certain fearful respect for his person, induced him to preserve a very reserved demeanour, and to adopt a secluded habit of life, which greatly awed the minds of the natives.

His first attention was directed to the relations then existing between Fantee and Ashantee. Without some security for the continuance of

peace, he knew it was in vain to endeavour to introduce anything like permanent order into society. But once relieved from the disturbing influence of the Ashantees, there would be an opportunity of entering upon a reform of the turbulent and lawless tribes in more immediate contact with the settlements. He, therefore, set about paving the way for this ulterior object.

Ashantees and Fantees, alike weary of the unsatisfactory nature of their relations, since the battle of Doodowah, began to wish for peace. This desire was even more general with the Ashantees than the Fantees, for though a warlike people, they were even then attached to commercial pursuits, which had been greatly interrupted by the insecurity of the paths. Under these circumstances, the governor managed to assemble a congress of deputies from Ashantee and from the allied chiefs, at Accra, at which a very stormy debate took place. It was no easy matter to reconcile the views of the different parties met together in this assembly. The Ashantee deputies could ill brook to submit to have the terms dictated to them, upon which alone peace and free intercourse with the settlements could be granted. Their haughty pride took fire

at the idea of treating with the allied tribes upon a footing of equality. The remembrance of their former subjection to the king, coupled with the thought that such an extensive field for plunder and oppression was about to be closed against them, suggested ideas of a renewal of the struggle. But the king's relations were still prisoners at Cape Coast. The English had thrown the whole weight of their influence into the Fantee scale, and made their cause their own.

An unanimous spirit of resistance to the Ashantee yoke animated every tribe from the Assinee to the Volta. The revolt of the King of Denkera and the Assin chiefs, who had long been integral parts of the Ashantee kingdom, had greatly weakened their power, and increased that of the allies. The spell of invincibility had been broken, and the elation of victory was with their enemies. All these considerations induced them to moderate their tone, and to subdue their natural pride of heart. On the other hand, the allied tribes, proud of their victory, and confident in their numbers, believed themselves now more than a match for the Ashantees. Exasperated with the memory of countless wrongs, they looked for compensation and redress for the past, as well as security for the future.

It was for the governor to moderate the claims and pretensions of either party, and his happy tact enabled him to do this with effect. He impressed upon them the necessity of consigning the past to oblivion, as the only sure way of coming to an amicable understanding. He represented forcibly the misery to both parties attending a continued state of hostility, and added threats to arguments —to the Fantees, the withdrawal of the English assistance and protection, if they continued unreasonable; to the Ashantees, renewed and more vigorous exertions to crush them. After much trouble, the terms of the treaty were at last agreed upon. It guaranteed the independence from Ashantee of Appollonia, Ahanta, Wassaw, Fantee (including in that term Affetoo, Abrah, Accoomfee, Agoonah, Goomoah and Accra), Assin, Akim and Aquapim, and placed them under British protection. It also acknowledged the independence of Cudjoe Cheboo of Denkera, who, with his people, was to reside near Cape Coast Castle.

These extensive districts were henceforth relieved from the yoke of Ashantee, and the king no longer permitted to treat with them in any way, except through the governor, to whom he was to apply for redress in all cases of injury done to himself or people. The king's relations taken

at Doodowah were to be delivered up to him, and all other prisoners in the hands of either party were to be redeemed. The paths were to be free, and open to traders. For the proper observance of this treaty, the governor required the king to place in his hands two hostages of royal blood, and deposit in the castle six hundred ounces of gold-dust, to be returned after ten years,* provided no infringement of the treaty had taken place during that space of time. The gold having been delivered to the governor, and Oossoo Quantibissah, a son, and Oossoo Ansah, a nephew of the king, committed to his keeping, the peace was ratified by the native chiefs with the usual Fetish ceremonies and observances.

This took place in 1830, from which time we date the first dawn of a new and better era. The governor was now enabled to direct his whole attention to the better government of the people whom this treaty placed under his protection, and

* This deposit was returned to the king at the time specified, and he was greatly impressed with this instance of good faith. It seemed to astonish the Ashantees that the gold had never been disturbed in the packages, which were redelivered to them in the same condition as they had been given. The hostages were educated, and one of them, Oossoo Ansah, is now actively employed in the missionary service.

for whose peaceable conduct he had become responsible to the King of Ashantee.

A time of peace leaves but few events for the historian to dwell upon, but it supplies the philosopher with a wide field of observation, more especially when he has to trace the slow and gradual progress of a race of men just emerging from a low depth of barbarism. It will be our object, in the sequel of this work, to lay before the reader an account of the state of society in this part of the world with the changes effected upon it by the ameliorating influences which have been at work since 1830. But, before proceeding with this part of our subject, we will briefly carry down its history to the present time. The great and important influence exercised by Governor Maclean in developing the resources of the country, and the character of the people, has induced us to give more than a mere passing notice of this extraordinary man, and the reader will be able still farther to appreciate the effect of his government in the account afterwards given of the progress made in the social and moral advancement of the natives.

During the whole period of his government nothing deserving the name of armed resistance was opposed to his sway, with the exception of a smart brush which he had with Quacoe Accah, the

King of Appollonia, in 1835. The excesses of this monster had long called loudly for some curb. The commandant of Dixcove, Mr. Frank Swanzy, was, from time to time, sending to head-quarters reports of the barbarities which he was daily committing. As his fort was the nearest English position to Appollonia, he had the best means of judging of the enormities perpetrated; indeed, he had often ocular proof in the pitiful objects of maimed men and women who would occasionally escape to Dixcove for protection.

These moving arguments for action, as well as the accounts given by masters of merchant vessels, who had called at Appollonia to trade, and who were often subjected to gross insults, imposition, and even robbery, induced the governor seriously to think upon some means of putting a stop to such tyranny. He still, however, hesitated to have recourse to arms, and endeavoured to gain his end by means of written remonstrances, which were read to the king by his secretary. But no attention was paid to them; and the last letter from the governor was sent back unopened, the soldier who carried it having been ordered to look to a dozen of human bodies, withering in the sun, which were suspended on crosses on the beach

and to declare these and sights like these to be the king's only answer.

It appeared that these victims were inoffensive Wassaw traders, a tribe under our protection, who had been unsuspectingly passing through his country in the prosecution of their lawful traffic, and who with twelve more of their unfortunate companions who had been anchored alive at sea, and allowed to sink as they became exhausted, had been thus brutally murdered out of wanton cruelty. A deputation from Wassaw soon afterwards came to the governor, looking for redress. Humanity now loudly called for some avenger of its sufferings, and the governor chose to incur any disapproval which might be given to his measures, rather than to suffer such outrages to be committed with impunity.

He marched with all the soldiers which could prudently be withdrawn from the different garrisons, and assisted by a small detachment and an officer placed under his orders by the kindness of the Dutch governor of Elmina, he proceeded to attack the king. His force in all amounted to about one hundred and eighty men, with two officers, Mr. Frank Swanzy, the commandant of Dixcove, and Mr. P. Bartels, the Dutch officer.

Upon the first appearance of danger, however, a great portion of his men (the Cape Coast Militia) positively refused to fight, and deserted. Perceiving the inutility of engaging, under such unfavourable circumstances, he had the mortification of being obliged to retreat upon the Dutch fort of Axim. He had no idea, however, of giving up his project. In a short time, through the indefatigable exertions of Mr. Frank Swanzy (whose services then and afterwards were beyond all praise), he had retaken his deserters, re-organised his little force, and was again ready to take the field.

His second attempt upon Appollonia was completely successful. His Majesty's ship 'Britomart' having opportunely arrived at Cape Coast, Commander Quin, at the instance of the merchants, readily consented to proceed to Mr. Maclean's assistance. With this important auxiliary, it was no longer a doubtful affair. The Appollonians were driven before the little party for many miles along the beach, and after an incessant fire and march for the whole day, Mr. Maclean's party had the satisfaction of arriving at the ruins of Appollonia Fort at night. In this affair he displayed the greatest endurance, and was perhaps the only

one of his whole party not completely *hors de combat* from thirst and fatigue.

An instance of his moral and physical courage was here exhibited, which will speak his character in this respect better than many words. Although the king had offered a reward of two hundred ounces for his head, both before and after he had entered into his territory, this nevertheless did not deter him from holding an interview with him, in the midst of his army, without any other than a corporal's guard, and at some miles distance from his own men and the fort. In this manner he drew up a treaty with the king, imposed upon him the expenses of the expedition, which he obliged him to pay, and forced him to deposit a large security of gold in Cape Coast Castle, for his observance of the treaty.

After all, it may be urged, that it is only success which gives character to an action. Had the king, as was not unlikely, helped himself to the governor's head—thus, by his own act, placed within his reach—the conduct of the latter would have been stigmatized as fool-hardy and reckless, for having so credulously trusted to the honour of a savage, smarting under the galling disgrace of a defeat. We remember hearing this view of the case sug-

gested to the governor. "Yes, it is true," he said, "so would the world speak, but I had well considered everything, and was satisfied in my own mind that the object was worth the risk." His success over the King of Appollonia, accomplished, as it had been, without assistance from the other chiefs, tended greatly to strengthen his position.

In the beginning of the same year, the first attempt was made to introduce Christianity among the people. During three centuries of intercourse with Europeans,* no persevering effort had been made to replace their superstitious observances by the knowledge of the Gospel, if we except the wholesale system of conversion and admission to the Romish Church, practised by the early Portuguese colonists, which amounted to little else than the substitution of one form of superstition for

* A clergyman of the Church of England, the Rev. Thomas Thompson, proceeded to the Gold Coast in 1751, with the view of attempting the introduction of the Christian religion. He remained chaplain at the Castle for four years, and brought home a few natives for education, one of whom, Philip Quacoe, was educated at Oxford, and was afterwards chaplain at Cape Coast for the long space of fifty years. No result followed his labours. It is even said that, at the approach of death, he had recourse to Fetish practices.

another. It was reserved for the followers of Wesley to try to instruct the people in the doctrines and practice of Christianity.

A missionary from this portion of the Christian Church arrived among them in 1835. Since then their exertions have been continuous and increasing, and have been attended with results which it will be our duty to review at length in another chapter.

But while the governor was thus busy restraining and punishing the tyranny of the chiefs, and constraining them to an observance of greater justice and humanity, and the Christian missionary was earnest in sowing the seeds of a new religion; there were many discontented spirits European as well as native, who could not bear to see the introducting of such radical changes. The reforms of the governor were considered dangerous to society. The position which we held in this country, it was affirmed, did not authorise us to interfere with the native practices. They were not subject to the laws of England, and could not be punished for adhering to their own time-honoured customs, however repulsive they might be to an European. We may well be surprised to find Europeans urging this argument, to the extent of

raising a loud clamour against the governor for his interference with the barbarous practice of human sacrifice; but such was the case. This was a custom widely prevalent in the country at the time. The governor had early announced his intention of putting it down, and with the Fantees generally had succeeded in doing so. But, upon the occasion of the death of the mother of Cudjoe Cheboo, the revolted Ashantee chief, his injunctions had been disregarded.

It has been stated that this chief, with his people, after they had left their own country of Denkera, were permitted to settle near Cape Coast Castle. They established themselves at Duhquah, about twelve miles from our fort, and were received under British protection, upon the same footing as the Fantee tribes. Upon the death of his mother he sent messengers to the governor to give him information of the circumstance, and to assure him that he would observe the governor's law, and abstain from making human sacrifices. This announcement was received by Mr. Maclean with great satisfaction; but knowing well the species of saturnalia which the natives observe upon such occasions, and fearing that, in their excitement, they might disregard their promise, he sent back with the messenger a soldier to watch their pro-

ceedings. At the same time, he forwarded a present to the chief, and encouraged him to persevere in his present resolution, assuring him that a heavy punishment awaited him, if he should dare to have recourse to human sacrifices.

The chief reiterated his purposes of compliance with the governor's command; but, at the same time, yielded to his own prejudices, and the superstitious fears of his people. Sacrifices were privately made, but not so secretly, that the governor did not hear of them. Cheboo was brought to Cape Coast, and severely fined; and a Fantee chief, who was proved to have sent him a slave to be sacrificed upon the occasion, was also similarly punished. These repressive measures were magnified into acts of tyrannical oppression. Representations were made to the home government of the governor's severity. It was not difficult, in such an anomalous position, to rake together numerous acts which, submitted to the test of simple legality, could not be justified.

Indeed we had no legal jurisdiction in the country whatever. It had never been conquered or purchased by us, or ceded to us. The chiefs, it is true, had, on several occasions, sworn allegiance to the crown of Great Britain; but, by this act, they only meant the military service of vassals to a

superior. Native laws and customs were never understood to be abrogated or affected by it.

When these representations, therefore, of the arbitrary interference of the governor were made to the home government, the Colonial Secretary had difficulty in understanding the nature of our position among the natives, when he found the governor punishing what he was inclined to regard as murder, with fine. He could only regard the question from two points of view, that of Cheboo being a British subject, or that of his being an independent chief, and not amenable to the governor for his acts. In the one case, he considered him worthy of death; in the other, that the governor had done wrong in punishing him.

But while he placed the case upon this broad and distinct basis, he, at the same time, admitted the possibility of a species of irregular jurisdiction, arising out of the natural superiority of a civilised power being brought into immediate contact with barbarous usages—a jurisdiction partly tolerated from the conviction of its usefulness, and partly compulsory from the nature of our position. Viewing it in this light, he did not consider it necessary to disapprove the governor's act, but with that cautious avoidance of responsibility, so congenial to the directors of our colonial policy,

he recommended the governor to be very guarded in his interference with native practices, and threw the onus of responsibility entirely upon him.

This cold concurrence with—for it cannot be called an approval of—the governor's acts, was perfectly well known in the settlements, and emboldened those opposed to his measures of reform, in their hostility. But this had no effect upon his conduct. He persevered in the exercise of a most useful jurisdiction, which extended over all the other countries which the English had assisted in relieving from the yoke of Ashantee; and, as he had been blamed for interference at one time, so was he at another for not carrying his interference farther than prudence and a regard for the public peace would allow him.

Domestic slavery prevailed throughout the country, and was so closely interwoven with the very frame-work of society, as to satisfy any sane person that its suppression must be the work of time, and that the greatest modifications in every class had to take place through the diffusion of greater wealth and of increased knowledge, before its foundations could be at all affected. No one understood this better than the governor; so, while he did everything in his power to ameliorate the condition of the slave, and to pave the way for

his emancipation, he steadily resisted all crude and hasty measures, which were sometimes attempted to be forced upon him. His very recognition of slavery, as it existed among the native tribes, was set down to his favour for slavery as an institution, while, but for this recognition, it would have been impossible to exercise any influence over them at all.

Officers and others, however, who visited Cape Coast Castle for a short time, and who had not made themselves sufficiently acquainted with the state of society in the country, or with the nature of our position, went away with the idea that the Gold Coast was a British colony in which the governor encouraged slavery. Public opinion, at that time, was very strong in England upon this subject. Any statement relating to Africa and slavery was eagerly devoured, and accusations against the governor and the merchants upon the Gold Coast were readily believed, without the slightest acquaintance with the circumstances of the country. Even our rulers were inconsistent; and the men who seemed to think that the governor's interference to prevent and to punish murder was of doubtful propriety, and *ultra vires*, saw no harm in depriving the natives of their slaves, and in-

volving the country in all the miseries attending such a revolution. It was even alleged that the export slave trade was encouraged by the Gold Coast authorities, although it is a notorious fact that it was entirely suppressed by them along the entire line of coast, from which a single slave was not known to have been shipped during the whole period of Mr. Maclean's government; while, not many years before, we find the governor reporting to the committee the fact of seven slavers taking in slaves within sight of Cape Coast Castle all at one time.

But it was not necessary that such reports should be true in order to their being believed. They were so assiduously propagated, that the government considered it necessary to send out a commissioner to inquire into, and to report upon, the state of the African settlements.

Dr. Madden paid a short visit to Cape Coast for this purpose, but the state of his health did not allow him to acquire the information necessary for a correct report. Indeed, he never appeared to have understood thoroughly in what relation the natives stood with regard to the English government; and because he found slavery existing in the country, tolerated and recognised by the

governor; and because, moreover, justice was not administered according to English form and precedent, his report was most unfavourable.

A select committee of the House of Commons was then appointed to report to Parliament upon the state of the settlements. After a very prolonged inquiry, they agreed upon a report, which relieved the governor and the merchants from the imputations cast upon them. It also acknowledged the merits of Mr. Maclean's government.

"We fully admit the merits of that administration, whether we look to the officer employed, Captain Maclean, or to the committee under whom he has acted, which, with the miserable pittance of between £3,500 and £4,000 a-year, has exercised, from the four ill-provided forts of Dixcove, Cape Coast, Anamaboe, and British Accra, manned by a few ill-paid black soldiers, a very wholesome influence over a coast not much less than one hundred and fifty miles in extent, and to a considerable distance inland; preventing within that range external slave trade, maintaining peace and security, and exercising a useful though irregular jurisdiction, among the neighbouring tribes, and much mitigating, and in some cases extinguishing, some of the most atrocious practices which had prevailed among them unchecked before.

"We would give full weight to the doubts which Captain Maclean entertained as to his authority, until specifically so instructed, to prevent vessels, suspected of being intended for the slave trade, but not having slaves on board, from trafficking in lawful goods within his jurisdiction; and we do not infer from that circumstance, that the government of these forts had any partiality for an abominable traffic, which, on the contrary, they have done much to check; but we think it desirable, for the sake of enlarging the sphere of usefulness of these settlements, and of giving greater confidence in the character and impartiality of their government, that it should be rendered completely independent of all connexion with commerce, by a direct emanation of authority from the crown, and that it should be placed, with increased resources, in direct and immediate communication with the general government of the empire.

"The judicial authority at present existing in the forts is not altogether in a satisfactory condition; it resides in the governor and council, who act as magistrates, and whose instructions limit them to the administration of British law, and that, as far as the natives are concerned, strictly and exclusively within the forts themselves; but

practically, and necessarily, and usefully, these directions have been disregarded, a kind of irregular jurisdiction has grown up, extending itself far beyond the limits of the forts by the voluntary submission of the natives themselves, whether chiefs or traders, to British equity; and its decisions, owing to the moral influence, partly of our acknowledged power, and partly of the respect which has been inspired by the fairness with which it has been exercised by Captain Maclean and the magistrates at the other forts, have generally—we might almost say, uniformly—been carried into effect without the interposition of force.

"The value of this interposition of an enlightened, though irregular, authority, (which has extended, in some cases, and with advantage to humanity, even to an interference in capital cases,) is borne witness to, not only by parties connected with the government of the settlements, who might be suspected of a bias in its favour, but also by the Wesleyan missionaries, and even by Dr. Madden, who, objecting to its undefined extent, and to the manner in which, in some respects, it has been carried out, yet still bears high testimony to its practical value, to its acknowledged equity, and to its superiority over

the barbarous customs which it tends to supersede.

"Even the duration of imprisonment, of which he complains, has been usually adjudged to offences which would have incurred a severer penalty in most civilised countries, and would certainly, if left to the arbitrary decision of native chiefs, or to the 'wild justice' of private revenge, have been punished by death, and that frequently of the most cruel kind. Still, however, it is desirable that this jurisdiction should be better defined and understood, and that a judicial officer should be placed at the disposal of the governor, to assist, or supersede, partially or entirely, his judicial functions, and those now exercised by the council and the several commandants in their magisterial capacity; but we would recommend, that while he follows in his decisions the general principles, he be not restricted to the technicalities of British law, and that altogether he should be allowed a large discretion."

In consequence of the recommendation of this committee, the Colonial Office resumed the direct management of the affairs of the Gold Coast, and placed the settlements once more under the immediate control of the crown in 1844. The appointment of governor was given to Commander Hill

of the Royal Navy, and Mr. Maclean's long and eminent, though ill-appreciated, services were rewarded with a secondary place. The species of jurisdiction which he had contrived to establish over the Fantee tribes, was made legal by an act of parliament, under which his appointment of judicial assessor to the native chiefs was given him. This office, which was, in fact, that of chief justice, entailed upon him the whole of the judicial administration of the country, not in accordance with the strict form of English law, but with a large discretionary power to assimilate native law and practice to English ideas of justice. It was, in short, the continuance of the jurisdiction which he himself had originated, and which had been so much cavilled at, now fully approved of, and legalised by act of parliament.

With the short interruption of a visit to Europe, he continued to discharge the duties of this office until his death, which took place at Cape Coast in May, 1847, amidst the tears and lamentations of the natives, to whom he had become greatly endeared, from his long residence among them, and for the benefits which they felt sensible of having derived from his government. But it was not among the natives alone over whom he exercised jurisdiction that his merits were acknowledged.

The King of Ashantee and his people equally deplored his loss. The protection which the traders of that country enjoyed in their visits to the coast, through the terror of his name, and the redress which they never failed to receive upon just complaint being made, induced them to look upon him also as their protector. So necessary did the king consider him for the peace of the country, that he was in the habit of making stated prayers and sacrifices to his Fetish, for a continuance of his health and friendship.

Now that the grave has closed upon him, we may be permitted to pay this humble but just tribute to his memory. The objections to his government were no better founded than would be similar accusations against the Rajah Brooke, for not governing his Dyaks according to the strict letter of English law. They both had to do with a state of society which required direct and speedy remedies, and toleration, and a faith in better things to come; and there is this in common between them, that they have both, with very limited means, been instrumental in conferring incalculable benefits upon long-neglected and degraded portions of the human race.

Soon after Governor Hill's arrival at the seat of his government, an Ashantee was murdered in

Assin. The king seemed inclined to take advantage of this circumstance, to try the character of the new governor. He sent down his executioners for the murderer's head, and made other demands, which evinced a spirit of encroachment. He requested the governor to remove his protection from the Assins, and to allow him to chastise them in his own way. These insolent demands were met with a becoming spirit, and the messengers returned to Ashantee convinced that they could not bully or intimidate the governor."

Captain Hill very soon resigned his appointment, and was succeeded by Captain Winniett. During his administration, affairs continued to progress steadily in the direction which had been given them. He visited the King of Dahomey, with the view of inducing him to sign a treaty for the abolition of the slave trade, and afterwards sent an officer to him upon a similar mission. But although both were well-received by the king, they failed in obtaining their object. He also paid a visit to the King of Ashantee at Coomassie, principally for the purpose of urging him to give up the practice of human sacrifice. In this he also failed. He proposed to visit the King of Appollonia, but he shut his country against him.

This was the same Quacoe Accah against whom Mr. Maclean had led an expedition in 1835.

For some time after the chastisement which he then received, he conducted himself in a more becoming manner, but gradually he relapsed into his former tyrannical conduct, and forfeited the gold which he had deposited in the castle as security for his peaceable behaviour. Mr. Maclean had been anxious to lead another expedition against him, but the government would not sanction it. Governor Hill was also on the point of making an attack upon him, but the senior naval officer in command refusing assistance, he desisted. Governor Winniett, soon after his arrival, tried to open a communication with him, but he detained and imprisoned his messengers, and, at the same time, gave loose to the most abandoned cruelty and oppression. After this, he waylaid and killed the French commandant of Assinee. He made an attack upon the Dutch canoes peaceably prosecuting their fishing off Axim Fort, and seized and carried off eleven prisoners. He cut off the heads of a party of Wassaw traders, and hunted to death every stranger whom he could find near his borders, giving as a reward for the zeal of his followers two ounces of gold for every head which they

brought him. It was his ambition to surround his town with a network full of heads, and he was engaged in this undertaking, when he was aroused by a sudden danger, for which he was altogether unprepared.

The atrocities of this monster made it imperative upon the governor to check him. So many complaints were poured in on every hand, that it was impossible to disregard them and maintain our influence upon the coast. Appollonia, from the fact of our once having had a fort there, was, in the estimation of the natives, considered English territory. The Dutch and French also regarded it in the same light, and all looked to the English governor for redress. Moreover, the seizure and imprisonment of the governor's messengers demanded satisfaction. With so many arguments to induce him to have recourse to arms, he no longer hesitated. But it was necessary that our success should be complete, as the effect of a failure, or even of a partial success, would be prejudicial to the moral influence of our government, generally.

It was known that the King of Appollonia had been heard to say, that he would resist to the last any attempt to conquer him; and he was at the head of about two thousand armed followers accus-

tomed to predatory warfare. The governor had only a single company of the 1st West India Regiment, and some thirty armed policemen. It was, therefore, necessary to have recourse to the native chiefs for assistance, and to put to the proof the value and efficiency of that military service, which they had always been vaunting as the nature of their allegiance to the government. Nor was the appeal made in vain. On the 17th of March, 1848, notice was given to a few of the neighbouring chiefs to prepare themselves to attend the governor in an expedition against Appollonia; and, on the 7th of April, he was in possession of the king's town, at the head of six thousand native auxiliaries, after a march of a hundred miles. They responded at once, and eagerly to the call, and it was with much difficulty that five times the number were prevented from joining the expedition.

The king had been in perfect ignorance of his movements, so isolated had his cruelties rendered him from the rest of the world. There was, therefore, little forcible resistance offered to the governor, but a fortnight elapsed before he got possession of the king's person.

His subjects, seeing the futility of supporting his authority, and finding that the governor was

resolved upon his destruction, were willing to betray him. They joined their forces with the governor, and appeared most zealous in his service. They delivered up the king, who had been lurking for some time with a few followers in the woods, and daily changing his hiding-place. He was at last deserted by all, and when taken, it was with difficulty that his subjects, over whom he had so long tyrannized, were restrained from killing him. The governor removed him and all his family to Cape Coast Castle, by desire of the people of Appollonia, who seemed greatly delighted with the prospect of getting rid of him. They were allowed to elect a head man in his stead, who was to be amenable to the English authorities upon the coast for his acts. Their choice fell upon Baheenie, an old captain of the king's, who had been a refugee from the country for the last ten years.

Having incurred Accah's displeasure, he had cut off one of his ears, deprived him of his wives, and imprisoned him. Baheenie made his escape to Dixcove, where he had chiefly resided since; but joining the governor's expedition, in the hope of being once more restored to his country, he had been of great service, from his knowledge of the paths and of the people. He was a principal cause of the capture

of Accah, and now was rewarded with the government of the district.

Accah, like Napoleon, was tried by the allied chiefs, presided over by the governor. They passed a sentence of death upon him, but the governor did not choose to carry it into effect without referring the case to the home government. The sentence was commuted into imprisonment for life in Cape Coast Castle. Here he died in the beginning of 1852, having pined away from the date of his imprisonment, and passed the last year of his existence in a state of mental imbecility bordering on idiotcy.

The removal of this tyrant from Appollonia brought that country under the immediate surveillance of the authorities, and made the intercourse with the interior in that direction, which had been long closed, perfectly free and uninterrupted. The people of Appollonia themselves were anxious to be friends with the neighbouring tribes. The hostility had all been on the part of their king, who seems to have been pre-eminently a bad man.

The gentleman whom the governor left in Appollonia to settle the affairs of the district, received deputies from many neighbouring tribes, who had been invited to come to enter into a

treaty of peace. From Assinee, from Grand Bassaam, from Kringabo, from Aöwin, Nosoo, Affomali, Wassaw, and Axim, these wild-looking envoys flocked to see him, and looked with no small degree of astonishment at the solitary Englishman, quietly seated in the king's house, and laying down the law. They seemed to have difficulty in believing that Quacoe Accah, that man of terror, was actually dethroned. But when countrymen, whom they had believed dead, but who had only been detained as prisoners by the king, were presented to them, they no longer doubted, but manifested the wildest joy. Many of these wretched creatures had been found in irons in different parts of the country, some of them cast into the bush, where they had been days without food; and all more than half-famished. Relations of most of these poor prisoners had accompanied the envoys with the view of learning something of their fate, but with faint hopes of finding them alive.

It was affecting to see this unhoped-for meeting between mother and son, and brothers and friends; but more affecting still to mark the disappointment of others, and to see them turn to the heaps of skulls and ghastly heads to seek for their lost ones. Many a head was carried away by

these creatures, willing to be deceived into the belief that they were the remains of their friends, which they could now consign to the grave, with the customary marks of respect.

It was not difficult to reconcile the neighbouring tribes with Appollonia, for the king had hitherto been the only obstacle. In a month's time all was settled, and free intercourse established. This expedition, apart from its positive services to humanity, in relieving actual suffering, and giving liberty to the prisoners, had a most beneficial effect in strengthening the hands of the government for good. It was seen with what ease the governor could, at any time, raise up an overwhelming force to support order and good government, and to repress the disorders of society. It also tended to increase the self-respect of the Fantees. They found themselves associated with the governor in an enterprise which had for its object the relief of the distressed and the punishment of crime, and a higher degree of moral perception and sentiment was reflected upon themselves from this association.

It even operated in a remarkable manner in restraining licence upon the expedition, which was conducted with an order and a strict observance of the rights of others which could scarcely have

been expected. A march of two hundred miles was accomplished, by more than six thousand Africans, without pillage or other injustice being done to the natives of the countries through which they passed, and with a fine spirit of frolicsome and good-humoured hardihood. As the expenses of the expedition were defrayed from the king's resources, its benefits were secured without any outlay of the public money.

This, coupled with its satisfactory result, gained for it the reluctant approval of the secretary for the colonies, although, pending the arrival of the intelligence of its success, the governor had been severely rated for undertaking it. And yet, it was forced upon him from the very circumstances of our position in the country. He needed not, it is true, have yielded to this compulsion; but then he must have submitted to have resigned the useful and influential position which he had attained in the direction of public affairs. The moral influence of our government would have been at an end, and the country would have relapsed into the same state of lawless oppression from which it had been raised with so much difficulty.

It is impossible for a civilizing power to stand still in the neighbourhood of barbarism. It must be continually gaining new triumphs, or be reduced

to an abandonment of the field altogether. On this account it is, that it is cruel to visit with severity the compulsory measures of governors so circumstanced, and to make them personally responsible for a line of policy arising out of the very nature of things, contrary perhaps to their inclination, and independent of their caution. It is evident, on this occasion, that Governor Winniett's failure would have been his ruin, as he had been threatened with the whole expenses of the expedition. But, as he was fortunate, his rashness, as it was called, was overlooked, and he received the honour of knighthood, as a mark of his sovereign's approval.

About this time, the King of Denmark became desirous of getting rid of his possessions on the Gold Coast, and made overtures to the English government for their purchase. Various considerations made this a very desirable acquisition for England. In addition to a very passable fort at Accra, Christiansburgh Castle, mounting several good pièces of brass and iron ordnance, there were three minor stations, Ningo, Addah, and Quittah, the latter only being habitable. The possession of these gave the English the government of the whole line of coast stretching from Accra to the eastward of the Volta, and the control of

various native tribes hitherto subject to Denmark. It embraced a country rich in the plantations of the palm-tree, and an industrious population well skilled in the manufacture of the oil. It secured to us whatever advantages the Volta and the command of its navigation may be supposed to afford. And it relieved us from the operation of a counter policy in our immediate neighbourhood, which had often been a fruitful source of annoyance, and a decided obstacle to the introduction of useful measures of government among the population of this extensive district. With these advantages, it was not considered too much to give the crown of Denmark £10,000 for its Gold Coast possessions.

They were handed over to the English in 1851. The natives had no difficulty in transferring their allegiance, and even expressed themselves pleased with the exchange of masters. It was thought that it would facilitate the introduction of customs' duties, which would do more than defray the expenses of the government; but the Dutch government, whose settlements are dove-tailed between our different stations, having declined to impose similar duties, it was found necessary to abandon the idea.

Governor Winniett died in the end of this year, without seeing the completion of this his favourite scheme. Few changes have since taken place, with the exception of the substitution of a local corps to garrison the forts in the room of the company of the 1st West India Regiment, upon whom this duty has hitherto devolved. The present governor, Major Hill, has not resigned the idea of being able to raise a revenue in the country, capable of defraying the expenses of the administration. The natives have become alive to the necessity of contributing to its support. They are perfectly sensible of the advantages which they derive from it, and are anxious to prosecute the career of improvement upon which they have entered. They have consented to the imposition of a small poll-tax,* which would be amply sufficient for the purposes of government; but there will be many difficulties in the way of its collection, which may impede the operation of such a measure.

* Late accounts from the coast represent that the poll-tax is being quietly collected. This measure, which will be productive of great good, was adopted upon the recommendation of Lord Grey, who took a most warm interest in the advancement of the natives, and made himself thoroughly acquainted with their condition.

With the desire for farther advancement, however, which has become so general among the natives, there can be little doubt that their progress will now be continuous, and will force upon the government the adoption of measures suited to the necessities of the country.

CHAPTER VIII.

Arrival of Mrs. Maclean (L. E. L.) at the Gold Coast— Her mode of life at the Castle — Intimacy with the Author — Sudden death — Inquest — Funeral — False reports respecting her.

In the last chapter I have referred to the death of Mr. Maclean. It is scarcely necessary to remind my readers that this gentleman was the husband of the unfortunate L. E. L., whose melancholy fate has excited such a deep and lasting feeling of sympathy and regret in the public mind, and has left impressions of a vague and suspicious character highly injurious to his memory. As one who had the happiness of seeing a good deal of this accomplished lady upon the coast, who enjoyed and keenly felt the fascinations of her society, who only ten hours before her death had sat and listened with a rapt attention to

her brilliant sallies of wit and feeling, who was present at the investigations consequent upon her sudden death, whose eyes were the last to rest upon those rigid features so recently beaming with all the animating glow of a fine intelligence, and who, with a sorrowful heart, saw her consigned to her narrow resting-place; as one who retains an affectionate remembrance of her amiable disposition, and believes that he is only doing an act of justice to the dead, and is consulting what would have been her own earnest desire, I will endeavour to place, in its true light, a short account of her too brief sojourn in Africa.

I need not say, with what anxious expectation the British residents upon the Gold Coast awaited the arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Maclean. The announcement seemed scarcely credible, that one who had long occupied so prominent a place in the hearts of the British public, and who was at the height of her fame and popularity at the time, could resign the gaieties of a London season and consent to bury her varied accomplishments among the wilds of Africa. When it no longer remained doubtful, it was amusing to see how eagerly her works were sought after, and studied. To some they were perfectly new. Others had been long familiar with her impassioned muse, which had

found an echo in the deepest recesses of the human heart. All drew inferences as to her character, from the prevailing bias of her mind as exhibited in her writings; and however gratifying might be the anticipations formed of such a distinguished accession to our small society, there yet lurked in the minds of a few a latent fear, that her keen sensibilities would be put to a severe test by a residence upon the Gold Coast.

There was no European lady in the country at the time. She would have to depend entirely upon the resources of her own mind, with a very circumscribed field for their display; upon the pleasures of domestic happiness, too often intruded upon by the calls of public duty; and upon the sympathy of strangers sincerely anxious, but all unable to fill in her esteem the place of those whom she had left behind in her native land. All this was felt, and moderated in some measure the joy which her arrival was calculated to produce.

They landed at Cape Coast on the 15th August, 1838. I was at the time commandant of the fort at Anamaboe. I had been labouring for some months under a severe illness, and was unable to proceed to head-quarters to pay my respects to the governor and his lady. I wrote, however, to Mr. Maclean to congratulate him upon his arrival;

and some days afterwards, the governor being very unwell, I had the pleasure to receive an answer from Mrs. Maclean, who had the kindness to say, in the most flattering manner, that she could not write to me as to a stranger, as she was already perfectly acquainted with me from the report of her husband. I was invited to come to the castle for change of air, and it was very handsomely said, that in doing so, I would be conferring, instead of receiving, an obligation.

Some three weeks elapsed before I was sufficiently well to venture upon the journey. During the greater part of this time Mr. Maclean had been suffering severely from spasms, which completely prostrated his strength. When I arrived he was confined to his bed, and had not been able to rise for some days. I sent in my name by the servant, and immediately afterwards Mrs. Maclean came to the hall and welcomed me. I was hurried away to his bed-room, Mrs. Maclean saying, as she tripped through the long gallery: "You are a privileged person, Mr. Cruickshank, for I can assure you, it is not every one that is admitted here." I took a seat by the side of his bed, upon which Mrs. Maclean sat down, arranging the clothes about her husband in the most affectionate manner, and receiving ample com-

pensation for her attentions by a very sweet and expressive smile of thankfulness. We thus sat and chatted together for some hours, Mrs. Maclean laughingly recounting her experiences of roughing it in Africa, and commenting, with the greatest good-humour and delight, upon what struck her as the oddities in such a state of society.

She pointed to a temporary bed, which had been made for her upon the floor, and said, Mr. Maclean's sufferings had been so great for some nights, that the little sleep which she had got had been taken there. I declined to occupy an apartment in the castle, but promised to call daily during my stay in Cape Coast to pass a few hours with them. I took up my residence with Mr. William Topp, who had been the acting governor during Mr. Maclean's absence. When I met this gentleman, and others of my acquaintance in town, I found all as enchanted as myself with the very fascinating and engaging manners of L. E. L.

During my stay, which extended over a week, Mr. Maclean did not make much progress towards recovery. The spasms had subsided, but his prostration of strength was so great as to oblige him to keep his bed. My visits to the castle were daily. I did not always see him, but I spent

many very agreeable hours in Mrs. Maclean's sitting-room, where I was entertained with the most lively conversation. My own health was very indifferent, and I was only waiting an opportunity to return to Europe for a change of climate.

Mrs. Maclean's greatest delight seemed to be, to talk of her friends in England. Her thoughts were constantly recurring to them, and to scenes there which had made an indelible impression on her heart. Her anecdotes about many of the leading characters of the day were innumerable, and were told with a keen sense of humour, and with a sprightliness perfectly delightful.

She often spoke of those who had befriended her, or even performed an ordinary courtesy to her, with a warmth of feeling, which bespoke a heart overflowing with natural kindliness. It appeared to give her great pleasure to talk of her husband, and it was a source of pure delight to her to perceive how highly he was esteemed as a governor.

Upon one occasion she entertained me with an account of her first introduction to him. She had been residing at the house of Mr. Forster, the present member for Berwick, at Hampstead. One morning, after breakfast, he came into the library with a bundle of papers in

his hand, and holding them out to her, said : " If you are not better engaged, you will, perhaps, find some amusement in perusing these. They may serve as an introduction to the gentleman who wrote them, and who dines here to-day." She read the papers, which contained a narrative of Mr. Maclean's expedition to Appollonia, and she was as much struck with the beauty of the narration, as interested in the extraordinary scenes which it described. She amused her fancy in picturing to herself the appearance of the hero of these exploits, and had satisfactorily arranged it in her own mind, that he must be some grey-haired officer with a mixture of sternness and benevolence in his countenance.

Mr. Maclean was the last to enter the drawing-room, and great was her surprise to see, what she was pleased to call, " a very fine and fashionable looking man in the prime of life." All this was told with so much animation and zest, as to give to such an incident a decided touch of the romantic. Indeed, the great charm of Mrs. Maclean's conversation appeared to me to be the extraordinary interest with which she could invest the merest trifles by the lively expression and flexible play of her features. It was not enough to hear her. Without seeing her, and catching

the look, which gave point and energy to her words, one half of the enjoyment was lost.

But it was not in conversation alone, that Mrs. Maclean made a favourable impression upon those who had the happiness of her acquaintance. There appeared a spirit of active benevolence to breathe in every movement of her little figure, and to seek for opportunities of doing kind and agreeable things. Observing that I was sometimes more weak and faint than ordinary, she would insist upon my lying down upon the sofa, would smoothe the cushions for my head, run to her room for eau de Cologne to bathe my temples, and all with her usual grace and kindly sympathy.

It was necessary that I should return to Anamaboe, to make preparations for my departure to England. I only came back to Cape Coast to spend the last week of my time there. Mr. Maclean, in the meantime, though still weak, had greatly improved in health, and the attacks of spasm were much less frequent and severe. He had begun to give a little attention to public business, which occupied most of the time which he could yet spare from his bed. I was only too happy to avail myself of the pleasure of Mrs. Maclean's society. Since I had last seen her she

had become much better accustomed to her manner of life at Cape Coast.

Mr. Maclean had been sufficiently well to accept of an invitation to a dinner, which the merchants had given to Mr. William Topp, as a mark of their estimation of the manner in which he had performed his duties as governor. Mrs. Maclean had accompanied him to this entertainment, and seemed much pleased with the good feeling which prevailed. She had wished to remain at table to hear the complimentary speeches usual on such occasions, and she expressed herself highly delighted with the speakers, more especially with the very modest and graceful terms in which Mr. Topp repudiated his own merits, and attributed the success of his administration to the thorough stability of the government which Mr. Maclean had handed over to him. This he did, she said, by an apt quotation from one of the Latin classics, and it made her perfectly happy to hear her husband's services so fully appreciated and so elegantly noticed.

She confessed she had been very agreeably surprised to find such a small society in such an out-of-the-way corner of the world, composed of so many agreeable and well-educated men; and the kindness and attentions with which she herself had

been received by them, had been very flattering and gratifying to her. The state of Mr. Maclean's health was alone delaying a round of invitations from the merchants to welcome her to the country. She had also had a ride in a carriage drawn by the natives, and was equally amused with their cheerful good-humour and delighted with the beauty of the scenery. Every morning was bringing some new mark of attention from one or other of the gentlemen—now some fruit, now some flowers, now some engravings. Indeed, she was afraid that so much kindness would spoil her.

It was very pleasant to hear her going on in this way, and feel assured that her anticipations of pleasure had come short of the reality. There had also been a visit from the Dutch governor and his officers, in all the glory of plumes, moustachios, swords, and epaulettes. Mr. Maclean had not been able to leave his room to see them away, and the duties of hospitality had entirely devolved upon Mrs. Maclean; but she appeared to enjoy the very strangeness of a position so new to her.

One morning she had been startled by finding a couple of sentries with bayonets in their hands in charge of a party of half-naked prisoners, who had been employed to wash the floor of the large

hall. She was becoming accustomed to all these peculiarities attending a residence in a fort upon the Gold Coast; but the effect at first she represented as very comical.

The domestic arrangements also afforded occasion for much ludicrous remark. Her perplexities about housekeeping, the difficulty of getting anything to eat, and the blunders of the servants, were all the subject of her amusing comments. But the greatest bugbear of all appeared to be the governor's sitting-room, "the cock-loft," as it was called. Here he had collected all his books, chronometers, barometers, telescopes, artificial horizons, sextants, &c. His papers and letters were all arranged upon a table in such "higglety pigglety" confusion, that no one but himself could know where to look for anything; and yet he had never any difficulty in laying his hand upon what he wanted. He had as great a horror of the "womankind" meddling with this mass of confusion as the Antiquary himself; and Mrs. Maclean could never enter the room without the dread of overturning something.

She was employed in writing sketches of Sir Walter Scott's heroines, for "Heath's Book of Beauty;" and, if I am not mistaken, had Alice Lee, whom she greatly admired, in hand at the

time. She confessed that her ideas did not flow so readily as in England, and that she had much greater difficulty in concentrating her thoughts upon any given subject. Indeed, she seemed to have some alarm that the climate was affecting her.

As the day drew near for my departure, she occupied herself more and more in writing to her friends in England. It had been arranged that the vessel should sail on the forenoon of the 16th of October, and I agreed to dine and spend the evening of the 15th with the governor and his lady. It was in every respect a night to be remembered. Mrs. Maclean appeared to dwell with much pleasure upon the idea that I would so soon see her friends in England, and be able to give them a report of her welfare. Her mind reverted to them and to the scenes of her former triumphs with renewed pleasure. She could not avoid envying me the happiness of seeing "the dear old country" again; and she was anxious that I should not omit to call upon some of her more particular friends. A shade of sadness sometimes overspread her very expressive countenance when she spoke of them, but it was soon chased away by some bright thought.

At eleven o'clock I rose to leave. It was a fine clear night, and she strolled into the gallery, where we walked for half-an-hour. Mr. Maclean joined us for a few minutes, but not liking the night air, in his weak state, he returned to the parlour. She was much struck with the beauty of the heavens in those latitudes at night, and said it was when looking at the moon and the stars that her thoughts oftenest reverted to home. She pleased herself with thinking that the eyes of some beloved friend might be turned in the same direction, and that she had thus established a medium of communication for all that her heart wished to express.

"But you must not," she said, "think me a foolish, moonstruck lady. I sometimes think of these things oftener than I should, and your departure for England has called up a world of delightful associations. You will tell Mr. F——, however, that I am not tired yet. He told me I should return by the vessel that brought me out; but I knew he would be mistaken."

We joined the governor in the parlour. I bade them good night, promising to call in the morning, to bid them adieu. I never saw her in life again.

I was at breakfast next morning with Mr. Topp, about nine o'clock, when a servant burst hurriedly into the room, and said:

"You are wanted in the fort. Mr. Maclean is dead!"

Deeply shocked with this announcement, we hastened to the castle, and found Mr. Swanzy, Mr. Jackson, and Mr. Hutton, hurrying in the same direction. It was only on arriving at the gate, that we found that it was *Mrs.* Maclean who was dead. This still more staggered us, for the state of Mr. Maclean's health might have led to such a sudden event; but Mrs. Maclean the night before had been in perfect health. Never shall I forget the horror-stricken expression of Mr. Maclean's countenance. He appeared perfectly paralyzed, and could scarcely answer our eager questions. We entered the room, where all that was mortal of poor L. E. L. was stretched upon the bed. Dr. Cobbold rose up from a close examination of her face, and told us all was over; she was beyond recovery. My heart would not believe it. It seemed impossible that she, from whom I had parted not many hours ago so full of life and energy, could be so suddenly struck down. I seized her hand, and gazed upon her face. The expression was calm and meaningless. Her eyes

were open, fixed, and protruding. The chill of death was upon her. It was too true. Her bright spirit had fled for ever. Oh! how desolating the blight which falls upon the heart at such a moment! For some time my thoughts could not take any shape or form. A dead weight seemed to press with a numbing power upon all my senses.

I was first roused to the reality by observing Mr. Maclean. He had slid down upon a chair, and sat evidently unconscious of all that was passing around him. His crushed and woe-begone appearance deeply affected me. I went and raised him up, and led him to his chamber. It was some time before any of us could think of what was to be done; but when we had somewhat recovered from the shock, it was determined that a coroner's inquest should immediately be held. I went to announce this to Mr. Maclean.

"Yes," he said, "for God's sake, yes—do everything that can throw any light upon this awful visitation."

All that could be elicited, upon the strictest investigation, was simply this: It appeared that she had risen, and left her husband's bed-room about seven o'clock in the morning, and proceeded to her own dressing-room, which was up a short flight

of stairs, and entered by a separate door from that leading to the bed-room. Before proceeding to dress, she had occupied herself an hour and a half in writing letters. She then called her servant, Mrs. Bailey, and sent her to a store-room to fetch some pomatum. Mrs. Bailey was absent only a few minutes. When she returned, she found difficulty in opening the door, on account of a weight which appeared to be pressing against it. This she discovered to be the body of her mistress. She pushed it aside, and found that she was senseless. She immediately called Mr. Maclean. Dr. Cobbold was sent for; but from the first moment of the discovery of the body on the floor, there had not appeared any symptom of life. Mrs. Bailey farther asserted that she found a small phial in the hand of the deceased, which she removed and placed upon the toilet-table. Mrs. Maclean had appeared well when she sent her to fetch the pomatum. She had observed in her no appearance of unhappiness.

Mr. Maclean stated, that his wife had left him about seven o'clock in the morning, and that he had never seen her again in life. When he was called to her dressing-room, he found her dead upon the floor. After some time, he observed a small phial upon the toilet-table, and asked Mrs.

Bailey where it had come from. She told him that she had found it in Mrs. Maclean's hand. This phial had contained Scheele's preparation of prussic acid. His wife had been in the habit of using it for severe fits or spasms, to which she was subject. She had made use of it once on the passage from England to his knowledge. He was greatly averse to her having such a dangerous medicine, and wished to throw it overboard. She entreated him not to do so, as she must die without it. There had been no quarrel nor unkindness between him and his wife.

Dr. Cobbold, who had been requested to make a *post-mortem* examination, did not consider it at all necessary to do so, as he felt persuaded she had died by prussic acid. He was led to this conclusion from the appearance of the eyes of the deceased; and he believed he could detect the smell of the prussic acid about her person.

My own evidence proved, that I had parted from Mr. and Mrs. Maclean at a very late hour on the evening before, and that they appeared then upon the happiest terms with each other.

There was found upon her writing-desk a letter not yet folded, which she had written that morning, the ink of which was scarcely dry at the time of the discovery of her death. This letter

was read at the inquest. It was for Mrs. Fagan, upon whom she had wished me to call. It was written in a cheerful spirit, and gave no indication of unhappiness. In the postscript—the last words she ever wrote—she recommended me to the kind attentions of her friend.

With the evidence before them, it was impossible for the jury to entertain for one instant the idea that the unfortunate lady had wilfully destroyed herself. On the other hand, considering the evidence respecting the phial, her habit of making use of this dangerous medicine, and the decided opinion of the doctor, that her death was caused by it, it seemed equally clear that they must attribute her death to this cause. Their verdict, therefore, was, that she died from an overdose of Scheele's preparation of prussic acid taken inadvertently. I concurred in this verdict at the time; but I must confess that I have since had reason to doubt of its correctness. I learned, upon my arrival in England, that L. E. L., previous to her marriage, had all but died in a sudden fit, which was likely to recur.

It was also afterwards proved that Mrs. Bailey, upon her return to England, with the view of attracting attention to herself, and gaining notoriety, had made some flagrantly false statements in

reference to this event, and that she was altogether a person undeserving of credit. I then remembered that she had made no mention of the phial having been in Mrs. Maclean's hand until some time after she had found her mistress on the floor, and only then in answer to a question from Mr. Maclean; and it occurred to me that such a suspicious circumstance as a phial being found in the hand of a person suddenly deceased, could not fail to be immediately noticed and mentioned without any inquiry. These considerations induced me to discredit Mrs. Bailey's testimony altogether, and to believe that the phial had not been found in Mrs. Maclean's hand at all.

There was then the doctor's evidence; but there was no *post-mortem* examination. He rested his conviction chiefly upon the appearance of the eyes; for there seemed to be considerable doubts about the smell of the medicine, which others in the room could not detect. The phial itself was empty, and only retained a very faint odour. I have been told that other causes might give a similar appearance to the eyes.

After much reflection upon all these circumstances, I have long entertained the conviction that death arose from some sudden affection of

the heart. This is a point upon which it will for ever be impossible to arrive at perfect certainty. I have thought it right to state my own conviction, and my reasons for it.

In those warm latitudes interment follows death with a haste which often cruelly shocks the feelings. Mrs. Maclean was buried the same evening within the precincts of the castle. Mr. Topp read the funeral service, and the whole of the residents assisted at the solemn ceremony. The grave was lined with walls of brick and mortar, with an arch over the coffin. Soon after the conclusion of the service, one of those heavy showers only known in tropical climates suddenly came on. All departed for their houses. I remained to see the arch completed. The bricklayers were obliged to get a covering to protect them and their work from the rain. Night had come on before the paving-stones were all put down over the grave, and the workmen finished their business by torchlight. How sadly yet does that night of gloom return to my remembrance! How sad were then my thoughts, as wrapped up in my cloak I stood beside the grave of L. E. L., under that pitiless torrent of rain! I fancied what would be the thoughts of thousands in England, if they could see and know the meaning of that flickering light, of those busy

workmen, and of that silent watcher! I thought of yesterday, when at the same time I was taking my seat beside her at dinner, and now, oh, how very—very sad the change!

When all was finished, I proceeded to Mr. Maclean's chamber, and found him seeking consolation—where alone it was to be found—in the pages of his Bible. His heart was too full to speak. He wrung my hand in silence, and I left him.

Need I advert to the injurious rumours soon after circulated in England, respecting her death. The public, robbed of its favourite, required a victim on which to wreak its vengeance, and sought it in him, who was the heaviest sufferer. All manner of outrageous reports were circulated, and eagerly believed. It was currently told, from mouth to mouth, that there was a dark secluded portion of the castle, to which Mrs. Maclean was never admitted; and the imagination was allowed to people this abode with shapes of infamy.

It would be difficult to conjecture how anything so truly false and absurd could have ever been invented. I can only imagine it to have been built upon some fanciful picture of the dreadful cock-loft, which Mrs. Maclean may have given in some of her letters to her friends. A landing only three

feet broad divided this room from her own dressing-apartment.

It has also been said, that her letters to her more intimate friends contained complaints of Mr. Maclean's unkindness. I cannot say how far this may be true, but I cannot avoid thinking that a wrong interpretation must have been placed upon her words. At all events, I am certain that her husband was unconscious that she believed him unkind. There was not one of her letters sealed at the time of her death.

If Mr. Maclean had had any suspicion that his wife had cause to write of him unkindly, he surely would not have allowed those letters to have been forwarded. He had no such suspicion, and it never entered into his head to pry into his wife's correspondence. I. myself sealed the letters in his presence on the day I left the coast.

If any faith can be placed in appearances, I believe that she would have willingly shielded him from such cruel aspersions at the sacrifice of herself. I never heard her speak of him but with pride, and as a woman speaks who loves and honours her husband. They now sleep side by side on that lone shore, alike insensible to the praise and the censure of the world.

CHAPTER IX.

Nature of the native Governments—Modified by customs and precedents — Despotism in Appollonia — Wassaw Chiefs controlled by their vassals—Popular influence—Nature of succession—Origin of the Chiefs' authority—Story of Bissoo—Boissorah, an Anamboe Cabboceer, assumes his rank upon the death of a rich slave—Towns divided into Wards with Representatives — Hereditary feuds—Fights at Cormantine and Elmina—Armed processions—Pynins—Native councils—Modes of proceeding—Use of oaths—Fines consequent on disobedience—The King of Ashantee's oath—Story of the Ashantee Brothers—Oath by Sir Charles M'Carthy.

We have seen, that by the treaty concluded with the King of Ashantee at the close of the war, the English obtained for their allies an acknowledgment of entire independence. Those countries which had been formerly subject to that power, now found themselves relieved from the cruel exactions which despotic authority had wrung from

them ; and they returned to the simple and original form of government, which had been in force previous to the subjection of their country by the Ashantees. It would be difficult, however, to define exactly the nature of that government.

It was not a despotism, nor a constitutional monarchy, nor an oligarchy, nor a republic, but partook something of the qualities of each of these different forms, and depended much upon the individual character and riches of the chief. It was, moreover, greatly modified by traditionary customs and precedents, which appear to define the extent of the chiefs' authority, as well as the privileges of the people, and to be equally binding on both. From this cause it is that we see a strange combination of despotic acts, with occasional instances of great freedom and equality, in which the authority of the chief seems nearly lost.

Wealth, which consists partly in the number of slaves, and partly in gold, is, however, the surest qualification for power; and the rich man, if he does not choose to aim at political or municipal influence, has always the means, at least, of commanding the services of those in authority.

In Appollonia, until the deposition of the late chief, his power over the lives and property of the

people was perfectly absolute and unlimited, except by his own cruel will. To his treasures and a shrewd and crafty policy, he owed this despotic sway, which still farther enabled him to perpetuate it by the impoverishment of his subjects; until blinded by success and the abject servility of his dependents, he became guilty of atrocities which at length called down upon him the avenging hand of the government. No sooner had the English force appeared in his territory, than he was deserted by his oppressed people, who delivered him up to the governor, and were with difficulty restrained from wreaking upon him their vengeance by a bloody death. Thus fell the only absolute chief connected by the ties of alliance and protection with the English government.

The extensive district of Wassaw, which immediately adjoins the Appollonian territory, is divided into two chiefdoms, Western and Eastern Wassaw; the former nominally under a chief, named Badoo-Moossa, and the latter under Enimil. The authority, however, which these chiefs exercise is merely that of feudal chieftains, the acknowledged rulers of the district certainly, but without any real power over the minor chiefs, their vassals. Some of these, possessed of a greater number of personal retainers than the liege lord, do not scruple to beard

his authority, and frequently constrain him to adopt their views.

Where the interests of the chief and the vassal go hand in hand, the latter is always ready to swell the consequence of his superior, and thus increase the importance of their common country; but where the advantage of the vassal is little concerned, or where the wishes of the chief run counter to it altogether, he is lukewarm in his services in the one case, and absolutely refractory in the other. To prevent the consequences of this direct disobedience, it will generally be found that he has had the precaution to secure the support of other chiefs, who owe allegiance to the same master; and, by combinations of this kind, the authority of the liege lord is always restrained within those bounds, which are, in fact, indispensable to their very existence; as the atrocious conduct of the late chief of Appollonia abundantly proves how fearful a thing is irresponsible power in the hands of a rude savage.

But while the chief is thus checked in the general government of his country, his authority over his immediate retainers is absolute, unless, perhaps, which not unfrequently happens, some of these, by important services, by flattery, and a dexterous management of their master's weak-

nesses, contrive first to counsel him, then to remonstrate with him, and finally to govern him. This is, indeed, almost the invariable fate of an African chief, who, content with his rank and the adulation of his dependents, gives himself up to fancied dreams of power, and the indulgence of his passions, while his authority is shared and abused by a horde of avaricious parasites.

The same feudal system prevails among the Denkeras under Cudjoe Cheboo, the Assins under Cheboo Coomah and Gabil, the Abrahs under Ottoo, and so on, among the Akims, Aquapims, and others. But among none of those chiefs living under the protection of the government, is their authority of such consequence, as to withstand the general opinion of their subjects ; so that, with all the outward display of regal power, the chief is little more than a puppet moved at the will of the people, whom he appears despotically to command. This salutary control, however, is only exercised where the cause is general, and affords but a poor protection to such as have incurred the displeasure of the chief on a point where the public is but little interested. Here, indeed, he can act the despot without control; nay, he is only too frequently encouraged in isolated acts of oppression of this kind, by the flatterers

of power, who have not the penetration to perceive that they are thus sharpening the weapon that may be turned against themselves on a future day.

Under such a state of affairs as has been here attempted to be described, it will be seen that a considerable share of political freedom may be enjoyed where individual security is almost lost sight of. This would lead, and no doubt does often lead, to acts of gross injustice; but even here salutary checks interpose a shield for the unfortunate. It is only over his own retainers, that his ordinary jurisdiction extends. If he cite before him a retainer of his vassal, and attempt to enforce an undue punishment upon him, his own master comes to his rescue, and seldom fails to espouse successfully the cause of his follower. Again, if the offender be the chief's own immediate retainer, he has a personal interest in his well-being, as his power consists in the number of his people; and thus self-interest, not the least powerful ally, pleads his cause.

If we add to this the protection which the government readily extends to all, even against the most powerful chiefs, it will be seen that the native of the Gold Coast is not without his safeguards. This question is here regarded without

any reference to slavery, which will be fully canvassed in another place.

Having given some idea of the nature of the authority exercised by the chiefs, we are naturally anxious to inform the reader whence this authority has been derived; but, on this point, we obtain very meagre information from the traditions of the natives themselves. In general, all the satisfaction which we can get from them is, that the uncle or brother of such and such a chief enjoyed his "stool" or throne before him; from which we learn that the succession is hereditary; although it passes in an odd sort of way, not from father to son, but from the present possessor to his brother, or, failing a brother, to his nephew.* Sons in this country are altogether at a discount, and reckon for nothing in the body politic.

In order to be certain of the purity of the blood, the heir must be born of a female of the race, the people of the Gold Coast thus giving a very signi-

* It is curious to observe, by a reference to the travels of Ibn Batuta in 1324, that he takes notice of a similar custom in Soudan. "No one here," he says, "is named after his father, but after his maternal uncle. The sister's son always succeeds to the property in preference to the son." This fact favours the opinion, that the natives of the Gold Coast have migrated from the interior.

ficant meaning to the saying, "that it is a wise son who knows his own father." Ask them to trace back their race for a few generations, and they will perhaps stick to probabilities for a time, but ultimately they will lead you to fairy-land, and inform you of some most mysterious connection between their original progenitor and a hawk, a lion, a tiger, or a wolf. We are thus thrown upon our own conjectures, and obliged to adopt the only satisfactory solution, that the personal qualities of the individual first led to his distinction. Great personal strength, skill in war, and eminent services against an enemy would naturally obtain for him the respect and obedience of his tribe. As they increased in power, the necessity of extending and confirming this authority would become more apparent. Conquered tribes would be incorporated with them, weak neighbours would seek their protection, distinguished services would meet reward; and for the protection granted to the former, and the benefits conferred upon the latter, the services of a vassal would be rendered. To prevent the contentions which would naturally arise upon the death of a chief, or perhaps as a special mark of favour for his services, his authority would soon be made hereditary.

Observation shows that in this country the

principal source of feudal retainers has arisen from the necessity of obtaining a protector. Families and whole tribes, to avoid extirpation by war, have placed themselves under the wing of some powerful chief, who perhaps supported them in famine and shielded them in battle. Only a personal interest in the individuals whom he thus supported would have induced him to burden himself with their care; and he consequently expects, as a return for his protection, their ready and willing obedience as vassals. There are also instances of whole towns undergoing this vassalage, in return for money advanced to help them out of difficulties. It is necessary to bear in mind this construction of the society in this country, and to reflect that it has not advanced generally beyond the state here described, in order to comprehend fully the account hereafter given.

It will greatly assist the reader's imagination, in picturing the present condition of the Gold Coast, to revert to the feudal system as it existed in Europe in the middle ages. This parallel is rendered even more obvious by the fact, that in the coast towns a species of municipal council has supplanted the power of the superior, thus marching *haud æquis passibus* in the same direction as the free towns of Europe in the midst of

surrounding feudalism. The additional fact, that these towns hold several of the interior villages in vassalage only affords another argument for the justice of the parallel. This peculiarity in the coast towns is to be accounted for by the great difference in the occupations of their component members, one portion following the occupation of fishermen, and the other that of agriculture. Their direct intercourse with Europeans, whom they visit in their ships and in the forts, would also inspire them with ideas inconsistent with a state of vassalage; and, more than all, the authority of the whites, insignificant as it was at first, might inspire them with the determination of submitting but to one superior; and as they could not denude themselves of the obligations which they owed to their native superior without pecuniary compensation, it is very possible that they untied the Gordian-knot by cutting it forcibly asunder, or it may be (and this is the most probable solution of all) that the profits of trade in time produced a few men who, in point of riches, would be able to cope with, perhaps surpass, the original chief. His authority would be spurned, cabals would be formed, and the power of a superior would gradually sink into the nominal head of an aristocratic clique. An alliance between the

contending parties would be formed, and a partition made of their power.

Be this as it may, there is no doubt of the fact, that the natives living in the coast towns have an infinitely greater share of political liberty than their brethren in the bush, and that the native government existing in them, approaches much nearer to republicanism and equality. In the towns of Cape Coast, Anamaboe, Accra, and others situated under the guns of the European forts, or in the immediate vicinity of the sea, we find, as among the chiefs in the interior, an hereditary power vested in an individual, indiscriminately called king, chief, or principal cabboceer. He is the acknowledged head of the town, but has not, like the bush chief, any claim to the services of the inhabitants as vassals. Like every person of consequence, he is generally possessed of some slaves, and, as head of his family, assumes the full right to command even the most distant of his blood relations; but this is nothing more than a private individual can do, and unless he be rich, or his family powerful, it adds nothing to his authority. He is, in fact, the chief magistrate of the town, presiding and assisting in council and in the judgment-hall, but with a voice no whit more potential than his fellow-counsellors and judges.

These consist first of hereditary cabboceers, men of the principal rank in town, whose authority has been originally derived from the consequence which wealth has given to the first distinguished founder of the family. The number of these in each town is few, seldom exceeding three or four. This rank, however, appears open to any one possessed of riches, who has the ambition to aspire to it. A curious instance of an elevation of this kind occurred lately at Cape Coast in the person of a slave.

It was the fortune of Bissoo, a native of Moisee, to be made captive in his youth, and to be finally sold to a native of Cape Coast, where he lived for many years, little distinguished from the generality of his countrymen, many of whom are held in a state of bondage in this country. Being naturally, however, of a shrewd and intelligent disposition, and enjoying the confidence of his master, he soon came to be considered, as very frequently happens, more in the light of an honoured member of his master's family than as a slave. Not even a blood-relation is treated with more kindness, or admitted to greater favour, than these confidential slaves. When the general pacification of the country opened the interior for the purposes of trade, Bissoo, with that freedom which is often granted

to a slave, obtained permission to visit the interior. Investing what little money he had in goods, and easily obtaining credit for an additional supply, he carried his merchandize into Wassaw, and exchanged it for gold and ivory. Fortune smiled upon his adventure, and upon many succeeding ones, which he continued to make until all idea of servitude was swallowed up in his riches, which also supplied the means of overcoming the prejudices of the Cape Coast cabboceers, and of elevating him to an equal rank with them.

One of the present cabboceers of Anamaboe also owes his assumption of this rank to the riches of his slave. Boissoah's uncle enjoyed the dignity of a cabboceer in Anamaboe, but, upon his death, his nephew, Tettay, did not consider his wealth sufficient to maintain this state, and refrained from the ceremony of installation, wisely preferring competence in the position of a private individual, to poverty in the state of a cabboceer. Tettay also died, and was succeeded by his brother Boissoah, who, in like manner, declined assuming his rank, until the death of a slave of the family, who had accumulated a large property in slaves and gold, enabled him to assume his hereditary position—the possessions of the slave, which had been entirely at his own disposal in his lifetime, revert-

ing to his master at his death. These cases will convey to the reader the impression which has been intended—namely, that wealth is the surest, almost the only, qualification for distinction on the Gold Coast.

In addition to the king and cabboceers, both the council and judgment-seat are composed of the representatives of the people. The towns are invariably divided into departments or wards, and those residing within these divisions are formed into companies, who have each their distinctive flags, drums, and other equipments. The honour of his flag is the first consideration, and his service to his company the most indispensable duty of the citizen. These companies are composed first, of head men, or advisers, who are generally old men; then of captains or commanders, in gradation, who are selected for their influence and ability; then the flag-bearer, drummer, and general body of the division.

There are instances of women, from some particular services, either of themselves or of their family, being promoted to the rank of captain; and in the late invasion of the Appollonian territory, a brave Amazon of Dixcove marched at the head of her company. The number of these companies varies according to the population of the

town, but in general they do not exceed seven, seldom so many. Considerable jealousy exists among them in respect to their strength, and feuds of a very long standing are still kept up, and occasionally break out into open violence.

The most flagrant case of this kind which has happened of late years, occurred at the town of Cormantine, in 1841. Two companies of this town had long viewed the increasing numbers of each other with a jealous eye, and longed to prove to which the palm of superiority belonged. A dread of the consequences, however, restrained them from actual hostilities, until goaded by the taunts and reproaches of their women, who are ever foremost in upholding—with their tongues, at least—the honour of their company, they determined to defer a trial of their strength no longer, A muster of each division was deliberately called, their arms carefully prepared, a time and a place appointed for the contest, and a provision made to prevent the destruction of property. They then marched together to the scene of their contest, ranged themselves in order of battle, and commenced the attack, which would most probably have ended in the extirpation of one or other of the companies, except for the intervention of the writer, who being informed of what was passing,

hurried to interpose between the combatants. His intervention, however, did not arrive until two-and-twenty of them had bit the dust, and many others had been wounded.

Although it is scarcely a proper place to introduce any farther remarks upon this affair here, yet, as the sequel shows the lengths to which this *esprit de corps* will carry the Africans, it will be no inapt illustration of the feeling which animates them to pursue the matter a little farther. Upon the appearance of an European upon the scene of action, *sauve qui peut* was the cry, and friend and foe together ran helter-skelter into the woods. We proceeded to the town, which was almost totally deserted. As night came on, the women made their appearance, and gaining confidence from the quiet and friendly disposition which was exhibited, they soon set themselves to work to remove the dead bodies from the field to the houses. During the whole of this time, and not until next day, did any man make his appearance.

Late at night, as the writer and a friend who accompanied him were about to seek a few hours' sleep, the idea occurred to them of visiting the houses to which the dead had been removed. They passed from one to another, where the dead were

dressed out in their gala dresses, and where their female relations were assembled to do honour to their obsequies, but no murmur of grief was heard. Respect, deep and loving respect, was evinced, but pride forbade any loud expressions of sorrow. Into whatever house of death they entered it was evident that the conviction of their relations having acquitted themselves like men, had absorbed in the minds of the women all feelings for their loss. In one house, however, nature claimed her rights. The body of a handsome young man was stretched upon a mat and covered with a chintz. By his side was his mother, and he was her only son. All the *éclat* of bravery, and all the ardour of a partizan, could not extinguish the feelings of a mother; and she sobbed convulsively over the body of her son. By way of expressing our sympathy for her affliction, and of weaning her from her sorrows, we gently patted her upon the shoulder. She looked up with a half-strangled smile upon her face, and with a hasty "I hear, I hear," she expressed that she comprehended our meaning. The poor creature well knew our silent expression of sympathy; it was indeed the language of nature that needed no interpreter.

A similar contest took place at the Dutch town of Elmina, in 1846, which was only put a stop to by the cannon of the fort, and after the death of thirty of the combatants. These feuds generally break out in August and September, or immediately after harvest, at which season the different companies are in the habit of parading themselves by turns in the streets. During these processions, which they make with arms in their hands, they are accompanied by the women belonging to the company, who shout out in no mitigated terms the praises of their men. Not content, however, with extolling their own bravery, they frequently descend to expressions of the most abusive contempt towards the other companies. This naturally leads to retaliation, and ends frequently, as has been seen, in bloodshed.

The devices upon their flags also, are sometimes the cause of quarrel. Rude as these are, they nevertheless contrive to make them sufficiently expressive, and by the occasional adoption of some additional symbol to the original device, frequently convey both an idea of their own superiority and a contempt for others.

Where so much party spirit prevails, a good guarantee exists against oppression on the part of their rulers. Head men of each of these compa-

nies sit in council, and as judges with the chief, and represent their division. To these are also added a small body of men, called the Pynins, whose number corresponds with the number of companies in each town. These appear to be the official representatives of the town, and wear, as a badge of office, a very rusty broad-brimmed straw-hat, with a huge wisp of grass for a band. Their office is hereditary; but, unlike other successions in the country, it descends from father to son. Their duty, properly speaking, is to look after the police of the town, to suppress nuisances in the street, to clean the paths and roads in its neighbourhood, and to promulgate the edicts of the chief and his counsellors, as well as any other notice which it is necessary to make public. It is also part of their duty to perform, on behalf of the town, certain ceremonial rites connected with their superstitious observances at stated seasons of the year.

The institution of such a body of officials would be highly beneficial if they really acted up to their professed character; but whatever might have been the efficiency of their services on their first appointment, they are now utterly worthless. Inefficient as a police, and totally regardless of the state of the streets, their very existence is only

known from catching an occasional glimpse of their preposterous hats, or hearing the tinkling of their cracked gong-gong. At Christmas, too, and at seasons of condolence or congratulation, they do not fail to come to do the honours of the town; but, unless for the small present of rum and tobacco with which such visits are generally acknowledged, we are uncharitable enough to believe that these acts of politeness would not be repeated.

Such is the composition of the governments of the towns upon the sea-coast. But in addition to those official members, any person of respectability assumes the right of attending councils and of assisting in the settlement of palavers, which, if the subject be of much general importance, are conducted in the open air, and in the presence of as many as it pleases to attend. On such occasions, any one—even the most ordinary youth—will offer his opinion, or make a suggestion with an equal chance of its being as favourably entertained as if it proceeded from the most experienced sage. The soundness of the counsel, and its jumping with the general bias of the assembly, are the reasons of its adoption. To prevent this licence being abused, to the interruption of business, by the interposition of crude and absurd

opinions, a sufficient check is supplied in the general ridicule with which they are received—it being their practice to reprobate, in no measured terms, the offensive forwardness of the fool, while loud expressions of applause reward the prudent adviser.

The ordinary time for holding these assemblies is at a very early hour of the morning, at which season the intellect is supposed to be most unclouded, and the judgment most cool. At all events, their faculties have not then been disturbed either by the rum or the palm wine, with which they are in the habit of solacing themselves at a not much later hour of the day. But, notwithstanding all this, their proceedings are very uproarious, and, on many occasions, they are obliged to dissolve their meetings without coming to any determination.

Having thus had a general view of the formation of the legislative councils and of their courts of justice—for the same members compose both —we will offer a very few remarks on the manner in which they perform their duties. But to dignify with the name of legislation the simple resolutions of tribes so little advanced in political economy as those upon the Gold Coast, would be to convey an impression of a more enlightened

policy than we find existing here. Where no public tax is imposed, where no pecuniary remuneration is made for public services, where no means are provided against external aggression or internal commotion; but where the exigency of the moment, and public opinion, considerably modified by a patriarchal reverence for age, afford the only occasion for a new law, and the only process of its enactment, the acts of a deliberative assembly, descend to the level of the spontaneous and concurrent ebullition of a crowd.

Such, although passed with all the formality of deliberation, is the common origin of Fantee laws. The seniors do sometimes exert a little energy, and vindicate their title to their position by the promulgation of edicts, obedience to which they threaten to enforce by pains and penalties of a peculiar nature, such as the payment of a case of spirits, a piece of cloth, a fat pig, a goat, a sheep, and so forth; but their edicts, for the most part, are little else but a *brutum fulmen*, and are often successfully resisted.

There are always, however, in the community weak and defenceless individuals who have not the means of withstanding even the limited power exercised by these native authorities. Upon such, their contemned laws are vigorously and pitilessly

avenged"; and the disinterested legislators and judges enjoy, as a just recompense of their public service, an aldermanic repast of roast and rum. No doubt, in former days, before the English government obtained such a salutary influence, the resolutions of the native council were carried into effect with greater determination. The very fact that the fines were shared among the makers of the law would be a strong incentive for its enforcement; and the combination of so many interested parties would bear down all opposition, except that of the rich and powerful, who, however, would only be found too often ready to encourage oppression, and to partake of its fruits. But now that an appeal is open to all, this power has dwindled into perfect insignificance. Such appeals expose the absurdity and injustice of the law which is attempted to be enforced, and lead to its prohibition by the local goverment.

This prohibitory interference with their laws is never had recourse to where any useful purpose is their object. On the contrary, they receive the countenance and assistance of the magistrates in carrying out any beneficial measure which has originated among themselves. But it will be found that they have, for the most part, reference to foolish regulations respecting the crime of

witchcraft, the mode of observing their superstitious ordinances, and the respect due to certain Fetishes.

It will also be discovered that the cause of their enactment was not so much a pure and disinterested desire to promote the objects apparently contemplated as to lay snares for the unwary, and to multiply the occasions of imposing fines, which minister to their avarice and increase their substance. Where the condition of a people is stationary, the services of the legislator are almost entirely absorbed in the duties of the judge; and it is in this character that the native authorities chiefly claim our attention.

Although the Fantees have no written law, tradition has handed down to them a general code of regulations by no means inapplicable to the state of society. This code is so general, and shows so little deviation among a variety of tribes, that we are forcibly impressed with an idea of its common origin; but whether this origin is to be looked for in the natural necessities of a similar rude state of society, or in the general diffusion of laws derived from one common source, is a question to which it would be difficult to give a satisfactory solution. Strictly speaking, the jurisdiction of the native authorities of the principal towns—such as Cape

Coast, Anamaboe, Accra, and Dixcove—does not extend beyond the limits of these towns and their immediate dependents; but owing to the importance which they have derived from their immediate vicinity to the forts, and from the consequent concourse of strangers from the interior towns upon judicial matters, the head men of these towns have gradually acquired an influence which has induced them to pretend to the right of calling the natives even of distant towns into their courts. Obedience to summonses of this nature is, in a great measure, optional; but a dread of incurring the displeasure of a powerful town, frequently counsels submission. The manner in which these summonses are served is peculiar. Messengers are appointed, who carry as their credentials the message-canes or swords, with gold handles, of the head men. They proceed to the chief of the town where the party summoned resides, show the emblems of their commission, present the compliments of their masters, and require the chief to aid in forwarding him where he is wanted.

The person is immediately sent for by the chief, acquainted with the nature of the message, and obliged to accompany the messengers. If he is sufficiently hardy to refuse obedience, recourse is then had to oaths, which exercise a very compul-

sory attendance to the summons. It is possible that the messengers will adjure the chief, by their master's oath, to compel the person summoned to accompany them. This exposes him to a forfeit if he does not immediately have recourse to forcible measures. He therefore calls in the assistance of his fellow-townsmen, who will most probably place him in irons, and deliver him over as a prisoner to the messengers. Or it may be, that, without having recourse to the head men, they will make use of the same adjuration to the person himself; who, to avoid the forfeit consequent on disobedience, will generally be found ready to accompany them. This system appears to have been rendered necessary to supply the want of an organized force, or standing army, to enforce obedience to those in authority. As soon as the adjuration is made, non-compliance with the summons imposes a fixed amount of fine, which depends upon the consequence of the person in whose name he is adjured.

Every chief in the country of any importance, has, according to their native custom, a right to claim these forfeits, which vary in amount according to his rank. It may be supposed, that if the messengers failed to compel the attendance of the person summoned, their chief would have equal

difficulty in recovering his fine; and so he has, perhaps, in the meantime, but he is patient and waits his opportunity. The punishment still hangs over the offender's head, until chance throws him within the power of the chief, who does not then lose sight of him until the sum be paid. Years may elapse before this takes place, but the contempt is not forgotten, and the emissaries of the chief will often pounce upon him at a time when he little expects it; possibly, when he is quietly passing through his country upon some future day, when all recollection of the circumstance of the adjuration has passed from his mind, until he is disagreeably reminded of it by the seizure of his person; possibly, he may be quietly prosecuting his lawful business in the country of a neighbouring chief, who, being an ally of the other, and interested in maintaining their common privilege, will readily give his assistance in compelling payment. Thus no loophole of escape is left for the unfortunate victim, and for this reason the summons of a chief or head man of a principal town generally meets with obedience.

Where the cause of summons is pressing, and the party summoned is obstinate, the messenger often is not content with the adjuration of a single chief. He swears by the oaths of a number of the

most powerful chiefs, each of whom claims his particular forfeit in case of disobedience. The severity of the penalty in such a case almost invariably ensures compliance. By means of these oaths, also, litigants are in the habit of bringing their cases into whatever native court they please. A dispute arises without any prospect of accommodation between the parties at issue. The person who considers himself aggrieved, seeing no chance of obtaining redress by his own advocacy alone, swears by the oath of some powerful chief that he refers the point at issue to the decision of such and such a chief, or the head men of such and such a town, and summons his opponent by the same adjuration to appear there on a day appointed for the hearing of his cause. Although the settlements of cases of this nature may generally be referred to the feudal superior of both, or of one or other of the disputants, yet it is by no means imperative to bring the matter into his court.

The party to whom the appeal is made, may have no claim whatever to the allegiance of either, and may owe this acknowledged deference, either to his power, or to his character for impartiality. In the same manner, these oaths are administered as a security for the fulfilment of an engagement, or for the due observance of a judicial decree.

They thus render unnecessary the detention of the person, and obviate the necessity of maintaining prisons.

This system, although possessed of considerable advantages in a rude state of society, is, nevertheless, subject to gross abuse. It is a formidable weapon in the hand of an enemy, who has it in his power to wreak his vengeance by annoying and expensive prosecutions. This peculiar mode of serving a summons, of enforcing a decree, or of guaranteeing the fulfilment of an engagement, no doubt originated in the chief's necessity for some stringent law for ensuring the obedience of his retainers. Disobedience, in the first place, would most probably be visited by a fine, and this punishment in one case would become a precedent for another. The general rapacity of the chiefs, as well as the influence which favouritism and enmity exercise over them, would have a great effect in determining the amount of the fine. In one case it would be merely nominal, the chief receiving the submissive apologies of his favourite, as a sufficient *amende;* in another, the luckless delinquent might be reduced to beggary, the chief embracing with avidity the opportunity afforded him of humbling a contumacious follower.

As it would be the more wealthy portion of the

tribe who would be the greatest sufferers, the necessity of combining to resist acts of extraordinary severity would lead them to wring from their chief the most favourable terms for themselves possible, and so at last a regulated penalty would be established, which, without pressing too heavily upon the tribe, would yet be sufficient to maintain the power of the superior. This penalty, as has been already observed, varies according to the estimation which the chief and his people form of his power, in comparison with neighbouring powers; but nothing except considerations of policy would be capable of restraining the chief within reasonable limits, for the tendency of those in power in this country is to grind to the uttermost the unfortunate victims of their wrath and avarice, without the slightest feeling of compunction.

In Ashantee, death alone is considered a sufficient forfeit for disregard of the king's oath, and this punishment frequently includes both the person who has applied the oath or law, and the person against whom it was directed. Upon some occasions, where little or no blame can be properly attached to the latter, pecuniary compensation is accepted, if the individual be rich. The severity of the Ashantee law, in this respect, affords the people of that country, who are weary of their

lives, an easy method of committing suicide, without soiling their own hands with their blood. They have only to swear by the king's law or oath that they must be killed, and they are killed accordingly. Many poor wretches avail themselves of this gloomy release, from the oppressions under which they have hopelessly struggled.

An interesting case of this description which occurred not very long ago, is worthy of record. There lived in Coomassie twin brothers, so exactly resembling each other, that their most intimate friends were never able to distinguish between them. This resemblance was not confined to external appearance alone. The same mind seemed to animate both. Their thoughts, their tastes, their sentiments were alike, and in nothing was this similarity of disposition so marked, as in the strong attachment which united the one to the other. To such a ridiculous extent was this feeling carried, that (whether from innate sympathy or from affectation, I shall leave philosophers to determine) nothing occurred to the one, that the other did not immediately fancy himself similarly affected.

They lived in the same house, ate out of the same dish, drank of the same cup, and clothed themselves in similar garments. If sickness attacked one, the other, although in health, went through

the same process of cure, taking the same medicines, at the same time, and in the same manner and proportion as his brother.

The interest attached to such an extraordinary instance of fraternal sympathy, was still farther enhanced by their position in society, and by the comeliness of their persons; for they were of high family, and exceedingly handsome. They were, moreover, great favourites of the king, and enjoyed his confidence; until, in an evil hour, one of them incurred his displeasure, and was fined. This preyed heavily upon his mind, and, as a matter of course, his brother felt the indignity with equal bitterness. They sat moping together, in the house for some days, without any attempt on the part of the one to console the other; for both regarded the circumstance as a personal misfortune, which equally concerned both.

The king, being informed of their deep dejection, afraid lest the brother whom he had fined should lay violent hands upon himself, took the precaution of having him confined by means of a large log, to which he secured his wrist with an iron staple. This was done, not with the view of punishment, but out of a sincere regard for the young man's safety; the king believing that, when he had leisurely digested the affront, which had

caused him so much pain, he would recover his spirits, and become reconciled to him. No sooner was "he confined in log," as it is called, than his brother swore, by the king's oath, that he also must be subjected to the same restraint. The laws required that the oath should be confirmed, and so the brothers continued rivetted to the same log in as deep a state of dejection as ever. This state of matters continued for a few days longer, but the iron had not touched the wrist alone, it had entered the soul. Their pride was hurt beyond redress, the indignity was insupportable, life became a burthen to them; and to put an end to their miseries, they again invoked the king's oath that they must die. The king had no intention of driving them to this extremity, and made great concessions, offering to use his dispensing power to release them from the oath by certain sacrifices to be made in their stead, and attempting to coax them, as far as a sense of his own dignity would allow him, into a love of life.

But comfort came too late. They were resolved on death, and insisted upon the confirmation of their oaths. The king generally is not much inclined to baulk any one, when he has a fancy of this kind, but it is said that he gave the order for the execution of the twin brothers with great

reluctance. Thus perished these unhappy youths in the full vigour of early manhood; and, notwithstanding the prejudices entertained by many against the African race, we fear not to challenge ancient or modern history to produce a finer instance of devoted attachment and friendship than their simple story affords.

Having seen the operation of these oaths, we find, upon inquiry, that the same idea seems to prevail among all mankind in reference to their meaning. Christians swear by the cross, and upon the Holy Evangelists, with the thought of staking their hopes of salvation upon their truth, and of forfeiting their interests in the sufferings of the Redeemer. In the same way, although in a much less extensive sense—for his views do not go beyond the present state of existence—the African invokes his Fetish, in the belief that misfortunes and death will be the punishment of his falsehood.

The invocation of the Fetish, however, does not, as in the case of the Christian's oath, imply any sentiment in the mind of the appellant, beyond the desire to avoid the penalty attached to perjury. There is not mingled with this sentiment any idea of ingratitude, connected with a disregard of the oath, as if the Fetish worshipper were bound by the obligation of benefits received, to speak the

truth. The only ruling motive which his mind acknowledges, is a selfish fear that the Fetish will instantly avenge the contempt for his power implied by an untruth, deliberately uttered under such a sacred adjuration.

But when the Fantee swears by his chief, or the Ashantee by his king, there is an idea of personal interest present in his mind, as if his own welfare were bound up in the safety of his chief. From this cause it is that the oath of a chief, or rather the words of the oath, are expressive of some occasion of sore trial and calamity. They refer in fact to the most calamitous event in the life of the chief, or it may be of his forefathers, and even of his tribe. The great oath of the Ashantees, for instance, is "Meminda Cormantee," or, Cormantee Saturday, by which words they recal to mind the grievous misfortune which befell their nation upon a Saturday at a place named Cormantee, where their great King Sai Tootoo, with his escort, was destroyed by the Akims.

The oath of Ottoo chief of Abrah is "the rock in the sea," which refers to a ledge of rocks about the distance of thirty yards from the shore under the walls of the fort at Anamaboe, to which he and others betook themselves for refuge, when the Ashantees surrounded Anamaboe in 1807, and

from which he was taken, after much suffering, into the fort by means of ropes. In like manner Ammooney, chief of Anamaboe, was obliged to flee from his town, and to find an asylum from the Ashantees in the roofs of some of the houses of Cape Coast, where he kept lurking, in a miserable state of uncertainty for some time, in daily dread of being delivered up to his pursuers. Means were found to appease the Ashantees by the payment of a ransom, and Ammooney was restored to his town; but the memory of those days of misery is preserved in his oath of "Igwah," or Cape Coast.

Now, if an Ashantee is adjured by "Meminda Cormantee," or a Fantee by "the rock in the sea," or "Igwah," and either the one or the other refuses to obey the adjuration, then does the person by this disregard imply that he cares not how much the Ashantees suffered at Cormantee, nor how much misery Ottoo or Ammooney endured, the one on his ledge of rocks, or the other in his lurking-place at Cape Coast; and as these people reason from the broad foundation that he that is not for them is against them, the conclusion is plain that the contemner of the oath is an enemy, against whom they are perfectly justified in pro-

ceeding, the Ashantees by death, the Fantee chiefs by the more lenient punishment of fine.

The oath in most general use throughout the Fantee country is "by Macarthy's Wednesday," by which the Fantees acknowledge the paramount value of his services, and at the same time represent the deplorable condition to which they were reduced by his death. This oath is enforced by higher penalties than any other, inasmuch as the loss was general; and the man who can resist such an adjuration, is considered totally devoid of every patriotic feeling—as one, in fact, who would have rejoiced in the subjection of his country to Ashantee. It is therefore a very potent spell in compelling the attendance of those who are brought into the native courts, and it is very frequently had recourse to for this purpose.

CHAPTER X.

Knowledge of the laws among the Fantees—Mode of administering justice — Corrupt judges — Circumstances under which real justice is done—Case of Oboo and Quansah — Injustice of the Pynins — More equitable decisions of the chiefs and cabboceers — Mode of examining witnesses — Torture — Oaths of purgation—Ordeals—Decisions guided by custom—Advantage of European interference.

AFTER what has been already said, it is scarcely necessary to state that there is no course of study or preparation requisite to qualify a person for the judgment-seat in this country. In Europe, where the objects of study are so various, it is very possible for a man to grow up ignorant, in a great measure, of the laws which govern the community of which he is a member; and few, unless those expressly devoted to the practice of law and the administration of justice, ever trouble themselves with its study. The security of the subject under

a just and powerful government obviates the necessity of a minute attention to the jurisprudence of his country. It is sufficient for him to feel the law to be his constant protector, in the restraint which it imposes upon the evil passions of men. But in a semi-barbarous state of society, where such restraints, if not unknown, are nevertheless extremely precarious and uncertain, both in the time and manner of their application, the individual man is obliged to assume a defensive attitude, and to battle for his rights. The natural consequence of a struggle of this kind is to bring up every member of the community in a practical acquaintance with such laws as exist in this state of society. Hence it happens that a perfect knowledge of the customs and practice of his country grows up with the growth of each individual; so that, at whatever moment, after the years of maturity, the responsibilities of office, arising from birth and position, devolve upon any one, he finds himself perfectly at home in assuming them.

In no other way can we account for the universality of the knowledge of the Fantee laws, which we find among all classes of both sexes. It is true that these laws are neither very numerous nor complex. They refer principally to property, and as under this head, and as one of its

chief items, is included property in man, we need look to no stronger inducement to obtain an acquaintance with laws, which have such a direct and personal influence upon the mass of the population. But without entering into a particular consideration of these laws, which cannot be done until some account has been given of the general constitution of society, we shall confine ourselves at present to the mode of administering justice.

It has been too much the practice to represent the native tribunals as scenes of indiscriminate injustice which has no doubt arisen from the facility with which the judges may be corrupted. It may also, in part, have arisen from the apparent injustice of the laws which have to be administered; for to an European, who does not take the trouble to reflect how essential free institutions are to a proper vindication of man's just rights, the laws of uncivilized tribes, among whom slavery exists, and has always existed, as the principal foundation of the social system, cannot but appear as peculiarly severe and unjust. Owing to this unreflecting censure, individuals have frequently been loudly condemned for acts which ought in justice solely to be attributed to the existing state of society. Great as is the character of our own Alfred for the justice of his laws, and

the wisdom of his government, we fear that the Englishman of the present day would be inclined to regard many of these laws as little else than warrants for the commission of injustice.

But while we would shield the native tribunals of the Gold Coast from some portion of the unjust obloquy which has been heaped upon them, we have no intention to shut our eyes to the fact, that in general they are grossly corrupt. We believe that they have all their price, and that not exceedingly high; and that the rich man, in nine cases out of ten, will gain an unjust plea. It very frequently happens, however, that the applicants for justice are so poor, that neither the plaintiff nor defendant has the means to give a bribe. Their case, therefore, it may reasonably be supposed, is allowed to stand upon its own merits. Where such is the case, we have known the judges to take great care to obtain evidence, and to decide most impartially. This is one of the occasions upon which justice may be obtained; but there are several others where the chances are in favour of the right.

As these courts are composed of several members of nearly equal consequence, it will sometimes be found that one part of the members has been bribed by one party, and the other by the other.

A difference of opinion is of course the consequence; neither party is willing to give up its client without a bold struggle. They will not yield; and as they cannot both be justified, they fix upon the neutral ground of justice, and decide accordingly. They do not think, however, of returning the bribe, and the impossibility of flying so strongly in the face of justice is the only excuse which the unsuccessful candidate need expect to obtain.

Again, it is a common practice for litigants to appear in those courts with a numerous retinue, as if the justice of the case depended upon the greatest numerical force which could be mustered, and indeed it frequently happens that the decision depends upon this display of power; but where the numbers are nearly equally balanced, the judges think it prudent to act justly.

The case, however, we believe to be utterly hopeless where a person appears in court totally destitute of external support to contend against another with an imposing retinue. In such cases the weakest always goes to the wall. Indeed, so satisfied are the natives generally of this fact, that they do not attempt to contend the point at issue, but make preparation at once to give the satisfaction demanded, or limit their efforts to obtain such

mitigation as can be obtained for an acknowledgment of wrong, and a petition for mercy.

But there are few individuals in any community upon the coast so desolate as not to be able to find some one to support them. It may be that they purchase this support at the expense of their independence; but this is in the eyes of many a boon of so little consequence, that in general it will be found they prefer to have a master who will take some interest in them, and to whom they readily acknowledge a nominal servitude, to a state of isolated independence. The chief espouses the cause of his vassal, the master that of his slave, the head of a family his relations and dependants; and thus cases for adjudication rarely occur where the interest is not widely participated. Publicity is thus secured, and public opinion in some measure brought to bear upon the point at issue. Inadequate as this is to prevent injustice, it nevertheless operates as a very salutary check, for the African is very sensitively alive to the strictures or the ridicule of the world he lives in.

Under all circumstances then, we believe unjust decisions to be of far less frequent occurrence, and to be attended with less pernicious consequences, than the boundless rapacity and extortion to which the litigants are exposed. The first

thing to be attended to is the feeing of the judges and other attendants upon the court. No fixed rule determines the amount of these fees, which are generally proportioned to the ability to pay. An applicant for justice is possibly asked how much he intends to pay down before the hearing of his case; and he has very likely to beat down the judges to accept something less than they had valued their interference at.

The other party to the suit is then called, and informed what has been done. He, moreover, gets notice that the case will summarily be decided against him unless he chooses to come down with a similar sum; and except he does so, there is very little chance of his case obtaining an equitable hearing. Prudence counsels him not to be less generous than his opponent; and when the stakes have been equalised, the trial is proceeded with in a spirit of fairness, and the evidence sifted with precision and acuteness. But if either of the parties should overbalance the other, the scale of justice will, in like manner, preponderate on his side. The grand object is, therefore, to have a fair start, for it is only in this way that real justice will be attended to.

This corrupt and rapacious system is a very fruitful source of suffering; and yet so litigious is

the disposition of the people that they take little or no trouble to accommodate their disputes, without having recourse to their courts. So far is this from being the case that, on the contrary, they make them subservient to a spirit of revenge, and greedily avail themselves of such a powerful agency in effecting the ruin of an enemy. An example of the operation of this practice, however, will convey to the reader's mind a better idea of its effects than can well be obtained without it.

There lived in Abrah country, about fourteen miles distant from our settlement of Anamaboe, a man named Quansah, who resided with his cousin Oboo. The latter was the head of the family, and, according to the practice which obtains here, had entire control over every member of it, Quansah included, and could, upon an occasion of great emergency which affected the family generally, sell or pawn any of his relatives.

This family, which consisted of several other members beside those mentioned, lived together in ease and contentment under the jurisdiction of Ottoo, to whom they owed the allegiance of vassals. The most perfect understanding existed between Oboo and Quansah. They lived together as brothers, worked in the same plantation, and

devoted their combined energies to increase the family property.

In the process of time, Quansah informed Oboo that he intended to get married, and mentioned the name of the girl whom he wished to be his wife. Oboo endeavoured to dissuade him from marrying this girl, as he wished to see Quansah united to some of his relations, the natives of the Gold Coast generally being particularly addicted to intermarrying with distant relatives. Quansah, however, could not be persuaded to give up the girl upon whom he had set his affections, and Oboo felt himself reluctantly compelled to give his sanction.

Quansah had not been married longer than a year, when there began to be continual discord between him and his wife, to whom he was nevertheless much attached. He was disappointed at the prospect he had of being childless, which he attributed to the anger of the Fetish, caused by some infidelity on the part of his wife, whom he was continually tormenting with his jealous fears.

He began to suspect Oboo to be more intimate with her than he ought, and the complaints of his harshness, which the woman found it necessary to make to Oboo, only confirmed him in these suspicions. He proceeded from grumbling to more

direct accusations, and at length went so far as to summon Oboo to appear before Ottoo and his head men upon the charge of adultery. As he was altogether blinded by his passion, and his object in making this accusation was not so much to obtain satisfaction as to gratify his malice, he was not content with the simple process of submitting the case to the quiet and not very expensive arbitration of his chief, but he desired that a full council of the head men should be called, in order that he might unmask before them all the villainy of his relative.

On ordinary occasions the chief is assisted simply by his interpreter in the settlement of palavers, and it is always a part of prudence to secure the advocacy of these interpreters, who generally exercise great influence over their masters. But Quansah had removed his case from this court into that of the assembled Pynins, or head men, among whom the chief has only a deliberative voice like the others.

These men are altogether seen in a new light upon such occasions. In their individual capacity they are quiet and submissive, even to cringing; united, they are noisy, imperious, and obstinate. The responsibility which they would shrink from individually, they are bold enough to challenge

collectively. Hence acts of tyrannical oppression and extortion are coolly perpetrated, which any single member of the assembly unsupported by the presence of his coadjutors would unhesitatingly disavow. The decision of the Pynins conveys to the mind of the Fantee a species of abstract necessity, an irresponsible kind of fatality, which admits neither of resistance nor redress.

When the day arrived for the hearing of Quansah's charge, a large space was cleanly swept in the market-place for the accommodation of the assembly; for this a charge of ten shillings was made and paid. When the Pynins had taken their seats, surrounded by their followers, who squatted upon the ground, a consultation took place as to the amount which they ought to charge for the occupation of their valuable time; and after duly considering the plaintiff's means, with the view of extracting from him as much as they could, they valued their intended services at £6 15*s*., which he was in like manner called upon to pay. Another charge of £2 5*s*. was made in the name of tribute to the chief, and as an acknowledgment of gratitude for his presence upon the occasion. £1 10*s*. was then ordered to be paid to purchase rum for the judges, £1 for the gratification of the followers, ten shillings to

the man who took the trouble to weigh out these different sums, and five shillings to the court criers. Thus Quansah had to pay £12 15*s.* to bring his case before this august court, the members of which, during the trial, carried on a pleasant carouse of rum and palm wine.

The preliminaries having been thus arranged to their satisfaction, the defendant Oboo was then brought before them, and, notwithstanding his protestations of innocence, he was compelled to pay £12 15*s.* as Quansah had done. An investigation then took place amid the wanton jokes and obscene ribaldry of the crowd, who prolonged the entertainment while the drink lasted.

Quansah had nothing to ground his charge upon but his own suspicions, drawn from several inconclusive circumstances not deserving of consideration. His wife was examined, and declared her innocence, and the charge altogether remained unsupported by a single iota of evidence.

As Quansah, however, insisted that both Oboo and his wife should take the oath of purgation, the Pynins were not allowed to declare their innocence until this ceremony was concluded. But even this oath did not satisfy Quansah: he represented that the Fetish by which they had sworn, was not sufficiently powerful to reveal their

guilt, and that he would not be satisfied until they had made a journey to the Braffoo Fetish at Mankassim, and taken the oath of purgation before the priests there. This being considered the principal Fetish of the country, an appeal of this kind is not made without considerable expense; but the Pynins declared themselves satisfied of Oboo's innocence, without the confirmation of the Braffoo Fetish, whom they made it optional for him and the woman to consult or not, as they thought fit.

This finding made Quansah liable for the payment of Oboo's expenses; but there was little compensation to be found in this, for to raise the funds to enable him to begin this prosecution, Quansah had pawned his services to one of the head men who assisted at this mockery of justice; and, unless by any extraordinary good fortune he was enabled to repay the loan, he would very probably pass the remainder of his life in servitude.

But the evil consequences of this iniquitous transaction did not stop short here. Oboo and his family were simple tillers of the ground, whose entire riches consist for the most part in their periodical crops of corn, yams, plantain and cassada, which barely suffice to support the family, and to supply them with funds to purchase a

few articles of clothing and a little rum for the performance of their annual customs; upon any sudden demand for money, they have no other resource than that of selling or pawning themselves and their relations. On the occasion which we have been describing, Oboo was obliged to pledge two of his nephews to obtain the £12 15*s*., which was shared among the head men and their myrmidons. Thus we have seen, in this brief history, with what a fatal facility the corrupt nature of the native tribunals becomes instrumental in gratifying the passions of vindictive men. The instance here cited is far from being a solitary one, either in its criminality or in the injuriousness of its consequences, and it has been selected as of late occurrence, and as having come under the official notice of the writer, who had the pleasure of being able to restore to freedom the nephews of Oboo, by means of a process of disgorging to which he compelled Ottoo and his head men to submit.

It may, we believe be laid down as a general rule, that injustice or gross extortion is the natural result of appeals to such assemblies as we have seen convened to try Oboo. The participation of the responsibility among so many has the effect of giving their act an irresponsible character in the

opinion of the individual; and so their conduct is deprived of the only effectual check which operates here—the fear of punishment. This opinion of these tribunals seems to be entertained by the natives themselves, for we find them appealed to, less for the purpose of obtaining redress of injuries, than for the gratification of revenge.

But such is by no means the character of the decisions given by individual chiefs and cabboceers: justice, or such justice as the state of society admits, is substantially awarded by these. It may be, that they display too much eagerness for personal benefit for their services; but they are not addicted to pervert justice. More especially do we frequently find among the feudal retainers of a chief a mild and patriarchal system of administration, and a just and equitable consideration of disputed claims. To obtain this fair hearing, however, it is necessary that the utmost deference and submission should be paid to the chief, as he cannot separate personal feeling from public duty. The slightest indication of disrespect, or even of independent feeling, is quite sufficient to create a bias, which will guide his decision; and hence we find generally the most slavish subjection to the chief, and his favourable countenance purchased

by occasional presents of the produce of their plantations, or of the poultry-yard.

No person is condemned without at all events obtaining a hearing of his case, and receiving at least a show of justice and impartiality. The accuser is brought face to face with the accused, in presence of the assembled judges. He states his charge, which is then answered by the defendant; who, as the case may be, either acknowledges the truth of the statement, and justifies his conduct, or prays for a favourable consideration of it; or he denies and refutes it, and carries the war into the enemy's camp by a counter-charge. Witnesses are then called, who are examined openly, and without any precaution being taken to prevent the next witness who is to be examined from hearing the evidence given.

No fixed rule is established for the order of the examination of the witnesses. They are all present in court at one time, and questions are asked indiscriminately, now of one witness for the prosecution, now of another, then of a witness for the defence, again of one for the prosecution, and so on, alternating between the parties in such a manner as to give to the trial all the appearance of a debate, in which the witnesses are pitted

against each other. By this process, which answers effectually the purpose of a strict cross-examination, the truth is generally elicited, notwithstanding the prevarications and the mass of irrelevant matter in which it is frequently attempted to smother it.

No one who has not had personal experience of judicial proceedings among the natives of the Gold Coast, can form any idea of the apparently inextricable mass of confusion in which the cases are presented. The most patient investigation, the most deep-sighted scrutiny, the most diligent collation and combination of minute circumstances; nay, the severe and frowning aspect of the judge, indignant at being trifled with, must all be had recourse to, for the purpose of arriving at the truth. Even an acquaintance with their peculiar and idiomatic turn of thought, is of the utmost importance, and enables the experienced settler of palavers to obtain almost intuitively a perception of the real state of the case.

So little reliance can be placed upon direct answers to questions arising not so much from a downright disregard of the truth, as from a habit of concealing and entangling it at the outset, and of only admitting it to be extracted by inadvertence, that the European magistrate frequently

finds it necessary to follow the native practice, and to give to his trials the character of a debate, in which he finds himself arguing sometimes for the plaintiff, and sometimes for the defendant. Little delicacy is observed with regard to questioning the accused, who is subjected to a rigid cross-examination; and, indeed, however repugnant such a course may be to our English ideas of justice, there can be little doubt that, in the existing state of society upon the Gold Coast, this infraction of the rights of a British subject has far less pernicious consequences than would result from a morbid sympathy with the accused, and from the acquittal of the guilty, upon technical grounds.

The native tribunals occasionally go farther, and have recourse to torture to extract a confession of guilt when the case appears to them of an aggravated nature, and where there is a deficiency of evidence; but they seem never to have arrived at such a refinement in cruelty as stamps with ineffable disgrace the judicial annals of Europe. A temporary confinement, a flogging, and a plentiful shower of threatenings, serve their purpose, and even this much is not had recourse to except where the presumption of guilt is very strong. On ordinary occasions, where there is a doubt about facts, an oath is administered, an accused person

being allowed to expurgate himself by swearing upon or by a Fetish; but these oaths of purgation are not had recourse to except in cases where the evidence breaks down, the testimony of witnesses being evidently accepted as more satisfactory.

An accused person is also often called upon to clear himself by ordeals of different descriptions. Of these the one in greatest repute, and oftenest appealed to, bears a striking resemblance to the consecrated cake or *corsned* of the Anglo-Saxons. With them, if the accused person could swallow and digest this cake, he was declared innocent. In like manner the natives of the Gold Coast make use of a decoction from the bark of a tree, which is swallowed, and large quantities of water afterwards given to the patient. If the decoction, which to some stomachs acts as an emetic, produces vomiting, the person is innocent; if it has not this effect, he is declared guilty.

This statement of the practice of the native tribunals has no particular reference to criminal cases, which are not very frequent, but applies both to them and generally to the ordinary trials about property, under which class the right of property in slaves and pawns is most frequently questioned. Decisions are given, not so much according to any fixed law, as agreeably to the

customs of the community, which admit of various modifications ; so that where true justice is done, a property-trial resolves itself into an equitable arbitration, in which the disputants cannot avoid concurring. It sometimes happens that the grasping prosecutor has miscalculated his proofs, and has found, when he expected to assert his indubitable right to the possession of a whole family as slaves, and to be able to rivet their bonds more strongly, that a flaw has existed in his title, and that his reputed slaves are free.

Cases of this description, although of rare occurrence among the decisions of the natives, are by no means so unfrequent when the appeal is made to an European magistrate, whose decision, although tinctured by the spirit of a milder interpretation of native law, we are nevertheless supposing to be guided by the principles of native custom. For were the European to decide contrary to these, his decisions would be considered unjust by the party decided against, and only binding by compulsion. It would also be unsatisfactory to the other party, who would feel assured that his opponent was only waiting a favourable opportunity to resume his rights. The decision might also strike at the root of some privilege which he himself enjoyed, and although advantageous to him in the case in

point, it would injure him in one equally dear to him.

The European magistrate must therefore make his decision plain to the apprehension of the native, and not contrary to the principles of native custom. As long as he keeps these in view, his superior intelligence will enable him to bend them to the relief of the oppressed, without any great outrage to established rights ; and public opinion will go along with him, and support him, in the gradual and cautious amendment of native practice.

CHAPTER XI.

Gradual progress of human society—Physical qualities the cause of distinction — Slave trade carried on by the ancients—The effect of the propagation of Mohammedanism in consolidating pagan states—The universality of slavery in an early stage of society—The strange emotions excited by the arrival of Europeans in ships—Their effect in rousing cupidity—Consequent aggravation of slavery—Effect of the discovery of America, and an organical system of slave trade — European treachery and cruelty—The instinctive slave-trading propensities of the African.

WE have now given some account of the power of the chiefs, of its extent, and of its manner of exercise, as well as of the constitution of the corporations which govern the towns along the coast. If we have been at all successful in conveying a just impression of these very essential elements in the composition of society, little farther remains to be described to complete the picture; and this

little resolves itself into the various phases which slavery has assumed.

Physical strength we take to be the foundation of all power in a barbarous state, and injustice the foundation of all property. The strong man bends to his will his weak neighbour, not alone from the fear of punishment, but from an instinctive admiration of manly vigour. He is not slow in perceiving the advantages which his strength gives him, and his tyrannical instincts, whetted by the acquisition of increased power and consequence, stimulate him to consolidate and extend them. But in the primeval stages of a race of men living among wild and uncultivated forest lands, beyond the reach and without the knowledge of human beings differently circumstanced from themselves, there would be little or no scope for the development of many of their natural tendencies, which would only become known to themselves as circumstances called them into existence. The first care would be to satisfy the cravings of hunger and thirst, for which they would long depend solely upon the spontaneous bounty of nature; and even in the selection of their food from the natural products of the earth, they would be guided by an instinct less valuable than that of many of the inferior animals.

Their next would be to obtain some security against the hostility of the most savage of these, which they would find best attained by herding together in as great numbers as possible. The effect of this association would soon increase the difficulty of subsistence, and induce them to extend the circuit of their roamings in quest of food. As privations began to press heavily upon them, contentions would arise; but these as yet would differ little from those of a herd of cattle goring each other for the best tuft of grass. They would also lead to the same result—the separation of the gang into detached parties, who would seek a scanty and miserable means of support apart from each other.

When they could no longer find nourishment in the roots of the earth, and famine began to make havoc among them, dire necessity, that stern but most useful teacher of man in his natural state, would suggest some rude method of trapping birds and beasts for the purposes of food. The inventive faculty once called into action, greater facilities and improvements would soon be discovered for carrying on their warfare with the brute creation; so that, from being at first their helpless victims, seeking an insecure protection in the crevices of the rocks and the clefts of the

trees, and endeavouring to keep them at bay by their wild clamours, they would become in their turn the assailants, gradually advancing from the stealthy and timid trapper to the bold and expert hunter.

The effect of this first step in human progress would be to make up, for a time, the deficiency caused in the supply of food, by the insufficiency of the natural fruits of the earth within the compass of the tract of land which they inhabited; but in the process of time the chase would fail them within the same compass also. They would therefore be compelled to extend their roaming a second time, and to seek a continuance of their means of support upon new ground.

These successive advances into new regions would eventually bring them into collision with other tribes—the off-shoots, it may be, of their own original separation and dispersion. These, impelled by the same cause—the necessity of existence—to extend their wanderings, would view with a hostile and jealous feeling this encroachment upon their hunting-grounds; and as they became aware of their relative numbers and strength, would resist and repel it. Forced back in an opposite direction, they would possibly find opposing tribes there also, and they would at last discover that they were

hemmed in on every side by tribes of men similar to themselves.

A new idea and a new feeling would now arise in their minds—the idea of the importance to them of their hunting-grounds, and the feeling of their right of possession. From this enlargement of their views would spring a closer bond of unity among each other. Before, the supply of their individual wants alone engrossed their attention, but now the necessity of mutual support for mutual defence and preservation becomes apparent. At this stage of their progress the personal qualities of the individual begin to attract the attention of the community, and to gain distinction for himself. He becomes their leader and their principal adviser in council; but while war and the chase continue the sole objects of their pursuit, he lives upon a perfect footing of equality with the other members of the tribe, contented with and proud of his position among them, but without any superior advantages.

It is only when the numbers of the tribe increase, and the objects of the chase fail to supply a constant and sufficient means of existence, circumscribed as they are within certain limits by the hostility of surrounding tribes, that necessity again forces her useful shifts upon them, and instructs

them to increase the edible productions of the soil by a rude and primitive cultivation. Another great step in advance is now gained; and with this important discovery the idea of individual possession, apart from the general interest, soon becomes associated; but this idea of property is long confined to the fruits of individual labour. The man who clears the ground and sows the seed might be allowed to reap the crop, in the same way as his right to the bird he had snared may be admitted, but the reaping of his crop would convey no idea of personal property in the ground which produces it.

It is even doubtful if cupidity and cultivation would not be of simultaneous growth, and whether might would not at this early stage of society give the right to the reaper. At all events, with the knowledge of field labour would come the will and the power to command and to oppress. The weak members of the tribe, and women, as naturally weaker than men, would become the drudges of the strong, who would consider war and the chase alone as fitting occupations. Jealousies would spring up, rival chiefs would contend for precedence, until continual dissensions would at last force upon them the policy of an acknowledged superior.

In the same manner as he had struggled into power, others would aim at the same object in an inferior degree, and thus the strong and the daring would lord it over the weaker and less aspiring members of the tribe. But where the objects of pursuit are few, where the arts of civilized life are unknown, and where the only riches of a people consist in the food which they eat and the skins in which they are clothed, the chief, on ordinary occasions, differs in nothing from the other members of the tribe, except perhaps in being the idlest among the idle. Even a successful foray, where the heads and scalps of an enemy are taken in abundance, or living captives are led back in triumph, affords but a season for the gratification of cruel and vainglorious boastings in which every member of the tribe participates.

It is not in such a state of society that we are to expect much inequality of rank or possessions; and it will accordingly be found, that something approaching to a footing of equality exists in all communities, until man's avaricious nature has been thoroughly excited by the exhibition and enjoyment of new objects of desire, the possession of which leads to distinction.

In the absence of any reliable data, on which to found a plausible conjecture respecting the origin

of the various tribes inhabiting the forests of the Gold Coast, it would be idle to waste many words in curious speculation upon the subject. Considering how little we know of any intercourse carried on with them previous to the Portuguese discoveries, we would naturally be inclined to suppose that they had not advanced far beyond these first stages of progress at that time. But we have reason to think that the state of society, which we find existing among them, is not altogether the result of accidental formation arising out of the circumstances of their position. It is evident that they have continued for many ages stationary, without any advances being made in the arts of social existence. Their religious observances, their civil institutions, and, above all, their peculiar habit of mind, bear all the marks of a great antiquity, and correspond in so many respects with the accounts given in the Bible of the practices and manners of the heathen nations of old, that we can scarcely resist the conviction that they are corrupted copies of a very ancient tradition.

The accounts which Hanno the Carthaginian gave of his voyage along the coast of Africa, leaves the impression that the natives five-and-twenty centuries ago were in the same condition as the Portuguese found them. The Carthaginians saw

their night-fires, and heard the sound of their drums and of singing in the moonlight, just as we do at this day. If the traces of antiquity which we find in their manners and customs were not the remains of some more advanced system of government, it appears to us (making due allowance for the restrictive and debasing effect of idolatry upon the mind), that the ingenuity which could push them so far would, in these many ages, have advanced them still farther in the arts of social life. The testimony of the ancients goes to prove that the Phœnicians, Etruscans, Carthaginians, Cyrenians, Egyptians, Greeks, Romans and Arabians, all in their turn, derived supplies of slaves from the interior of the continent of Africa.

We think it very improbable that such a traffic had much influence upon the condition of the tribes inhabiting the Gold Coast. The first impulse which these were likely to feel from without, would arise from the tide of Arabian proselytism, which the victorious swords of the descendants and followers of the Prophet carried beyond the great desert to the banks of the Niger, in the vicinity of which, since the tenth century, have been founded several extensive Mohammedan states. The scattered pagan tribes would recede before the resist-

less torrents, and seek a precarious security in the fastnesses of the forest.

It is not likely that the Arabian caravans, which brought their merchandize to these newly-founded states, would be the means of diffusing a spirit of commerce beyond their boundaries. The propagation of the tenets of Islam by the sword would effectually bar all friendly intercourse between the true believer and the infidel; and as these caravans returned with slaves, and one Mohammedan was not permitted to enslave another, it will follow as a necessary consequence, that these supplies of slaves must have been derived from war and man-stealing.

We, therefore, are led to the conclusion, that an organised system of slave-hunting must have been long carried on by the Mohammedan states of Ghana, Wangaar, Sennaar, Darfur, Bornon, &c., the result of which would be to force the pagan population nearer and nearer to the western coast. It might also force upon them the policy of confederating for mutual defence; or, if this should appear too wise a measure as a first step, it would, at all events, induce strong and conquering tribes to incorporate with them the weak and the vanquished, instead of exterminating them, as was most likely the original method of dealing with

them. The first accession of power would soon be followed by many subsequent additions, until pagan states would arise able to cope with the weak outlying states of Mohammedanism. In this manner would spring up such a pagan power as that of Ashantee.

But the very limited nature of the intercourse which the interior countries of Africa were in the habit of carrying on with the north and with the east, would (until the coveted productions of distant countries, and the manufactures of nations farther advanced in civilization, were more widely known than we can suppose possible at this early stage), have little effect beyond creating a species of subordination of the different classes of society, which would resolve themselves—according to the personal qualities of individuals—into masters and slaves.

The earliest records which we have of the human race after the Fall represent the existence of a state of slavery, which appears to be a natural phase of society, in general, in a certain stage of its growth. It existed long before Moses among the patriarchs, and has continued ever since to exhibit itself amidst all the various races of man in a variety of shapes, according to their distinctive occupations. Perhaps it assumes its mildest form amidst hunt-

ing and pastoral tribes, is more exacting among a people living by agriculture and trade, and acquires its worst and most degrading shape where it forms itself the principal ingredient of commerce.

The Gold Coast, up to the middle of the fifteenth century, we assume to have advanced not beyond the first stage; but after that period, and especially after the building of Fort St. George of Elmina in 1481, it rapidly attained its worst features.

It is impossible to contemplate the origin of this intercourse between the races of Europe and the negro races on the western coast of Africa, without standing aghast at the frightful picture with which it is associated. We see the white tempter displaying to the bewildered gaze of the rude savage the glittering toys and gewgaws of an artificial state of society, and encouraging him to expose in like manner the productions of his own soil. We mark the avaricious sparkle of the eye, as, with startled surprise, he detects indications of gold, and learns by intelligible signs, that the country abounds with it. We perceive with what impressive earnestness he attempts to induce them to reveal their hidden treasures; how his cupidity is disappointed at the smallness of the store; how his suspicions are aroused that concealment is practised upon him; how he coaxes, how he

threatens, how he tortures, how he murders them! He at length spreads again the wings of his ship, and gradually sinks from their astonished view upon the verge of the horizon.

But mark what a change this strange visitant has effected among these simple people. Scarcely have they lost sight of his distant sails; not yet have they recovered from their vague and indefinite surprise and fear, when their whole attention becomes absorbed in the contemplation of the various articles which have been distributed among them. These become soon the objects of intense desire, and finally, after contentions and strife, fall to the lot of the strong. Now we behold the effect of this new element upon social intercourse. No longer content with the gratification of their former simple wants, new desires and cravings take possession of their minds. These they have been led to believe can be gratified by exchanging with the white man the gold of their soil for the coveted objects.

To obtain this gold, labour is necessary; and to obtain labour, hands. The chiefs and heads of the community compel the reluctant obedience of a portion of the tribe, to whose services they lay claim as a matter of right, acquired first by the natural obedience of the offspring to the parent,

and confirmed by superior strength and a habit of command. The value of these services, which had been before regarded with considerable indifference, is now fully appreciated. As they sift and wash the soil for gold, in expectation of the return of the white man with his coveted merchandise, and as each successive collection of the valuable mineral is added to the store, which the heads of families now begin systematically to collect, pleasing visions of their new-blown consequence fill their imaginations and excite their desires. Often do their longing eyes wander over the waste of waters in search of the white sails of the stranger. Each succeeding morning and evening find their first and last look turned in that direction; and as time wears on and hope grows faint, they turn with a superstitious awe to the few memorials which they still retain, and regard them as relics of some spiritual visitant.

But again a sail appears, and although long eagerly looked for, yet it is not without strong emotions of fear that the natives trust themselves within reach of the white man. And how strange, how complicated the feelings with which he regards him! His miraculous approach from the distant ocean, which he has been accustomed to consider the boundary of the world; the obedient and life-

like appearance of his vessel, which he regards as a spirit of the deep, as she stays her course and folds up her wings to rest; the colour, the dress, the arms of a strange people, so different from anything with which he is familiar; the beauty and variety of the objects which are exposed to his wondering gaze, the avidity with which these are exchanged for the apparently worthless dust of the earth, the order which reigns in the little world on board, the loud thunder of his cannon, and all the variety of totally new objects submitted to his senses, fill his mind with such passing bewilderment, that he doubts the reality of his impressions, and believes himself to be under the spell of an enchanter.

While he is lost in doubt to what class of beings he is to refer this new race, whether to regard them as benignant spirits come to bless him, or as malignant demons to torture him, the subtle spirit of their fire-water mounts into his brain, and exaggerated conceptions of their power take captive his imagination. The great poet of human nature has truly and succinctly described these first impressions:

"These be fine things, and if they be not sprites—
That's a brave god, and bears celestial liquor.
I will kneel to him."

But, alas! he soon awakens from this delusive dream, to a sense of the very extraordinary revolution which his new acquaintances have occasioned in his mind. There Avarice erects his throne and maintains his guilty state by every species of injustice and oppression. The ties of blood are set at nought; the parent barters the child to obtain a glittering toy, a gaudy cloth, or a riotous debauch, and the fetters of slavery are more extensively rivetted by each successive importation from Europe.

As yet, however, there is something of moderation in the gradual and progressive rise of slavery. The slave remains a member of the same tribe in which he is born; and, with the exception that he is transferable from one master to another at their pleasure, he scarcely feels his bonds; for to swell the retinue and to magnify the consequence of his owner, appears to be a service in which he takes an equal delight with his master, and labour of any description is almost unknown. It is not until the discovery of a new world, whose natives suddenly begin to disappear under the blighting influence of the white man, who is even more fatal to the South American Indian than to the African, that the darkest features of this frightful picture are revealed. The feeble frame of the Mexican

cannot support the burdens of his Spanish task-master, and his very race is passing away with the throne of Montezuma before the mailed warriors of Castile, when the stronger physical qualities of the negro suggest the trade in slaves from Africa. The indefatigable Las Casas, strangely partial and eccentric in his philanthropy, gives his powerful sanction to the importation of negroes into Hispaniola and America, and Charles V. gratifies a Flemish courtier with the exclusive privilege of importing a stated amount of slaves. This privilege is made a matter of traffic with some Genoese merchants, who eventually organize and carry on a regular trade.*

And now we have arrived at that period in the history of the African, when we see the Gold Coast transformed from a wild and almost primitive state, where such dark and cruel superstitions exist as ever haunt the human mind in its natural and unreclaimed condition, and occasion barbarous rites,

* Before the discovery of America it was customary to hold the natives of Africa in slavery in Europe. In Spain and Portugal they were very numerous, and it was necessary to enact laws to mitigate the severity of their condition. These slaves were chiefly derived from a system of kidnapping, which had not the same effect of rousing the cupidity of the African, as the organised system of trade introduced after the discovery of America.

revolting to a higher degree of civilization, into one vast pandemonium, with the worst passions of our nature completely unchained.

Previous to this period, we might have seen, perhaps, the bleeding victim laying prostrate beneath the sacrificial knife, have witnessed the frantic delight with which the savage gloated over the dying tortures of his captive enemy, or the suspected wizard and witch, with their whole kindred, given up to the flames; but some respect was paid to the general ties of a common tribe, and those of a still closer nature. But no sooner is the negro received in exchange for the commodities of Europe, and preferred even to gold, than universal rapine breaks loose, and the most sacred feelings of our nature are disregarded. We see the white man, at one time, having recourse to the grossest dissimulation, enticing the unsuspecting African within his power, and breaking his pledged faith without compunction; at another, we behold him leagued with a friendly tribe, carrying fire and sword into defenceless hamlets, and bearing off to his boats the shricking natives.

Again, he leads a band of midnight marauders, steeled to the perpetration of every revolting atrocity, into more populous villages, whose inhabi-

tants are locked in sleep. He heads the wild onslaught, and amidst the terrors of a night attack and the flames of the burning huts, which cast their strong reflection upon gleaming swords and frightful countenances, never before beheld by the negro, he makes an easy prey, coercing the strong by hard blows and ruthless stabs, and bending the weak to his will by the mere operation of fear. The old and infirm are passed by as worthless, and their querulous remonstrances often silenced for ever. For the powerful, who are eagerly seized, there are bonds and stripes; and for helpless women and children, indignity and affright.*

Sometimes, and this eventually becomes the

* There is no exaggeration in this picture. As early as 1441, Antonio Gonzales and Nuno Tristan captured some Moors about one hundred and fifty leagues beyond Cape Bajador, which was the extent of their discoveries. They carried them to Lisbon; but the king, being given to understand that they were men of consequence in their own country, and that they could pay a ransom, sent them back to the coast. Their ransom was paid in gold-dust and negro slaves. Other Portuguese navigators were equally unscrupulous and less merciful; and our own buccaneers regarded the defenceless natives of the Gold Coast as legitimate plunder to be seized as opportunity afforded. Even so late as the reign of Queen Elizabeth, great honours were bestowed upon Hawkins, who went to Sierra Leone,

general system of proceeding, the European rests contented merely to pay for his slaves, and leaves the details of their capture to the native dealer, his ally, whose tastes for such pursuits have been assiduously cultivated by every inducement which ingenuity and cupidity could devise. And, in truth, the lessons of the white man are not thrown away. His pupil enters upon the pursuit with all the eagerness of a natural instinct, and prosecutes it undismayed by any moral check. Every method in turn is had recourse to, to meet the white man's demand for slaves; at one time by open warfare, at another by secret cunning and man-stealing: the debtor, the criminal, and the victim of a public accusation are alike devoted to slavery. Even the parent's regard for his offspring has only reference to his marketable value. Such is the picture, or rather the series of pictures, which presents itself to our contemplation.

To those readers who have witnessed the effects of this traffic upon the social relations of a people, the endless variety of pretext for the bondage of individuals, and the different modifications which

and, as it is very naively told, "got into his possession, partly by the sword, and partly by other means, to the number of three hundred negroes at the least, besides other merchandize."

it assume, appear so implicated and so much interwoven with the very frame-work of society, that any attempt at analysis may seem absurd; but, notwithstanding the apparent confusion and strange anomalies which we encounter at every step of our inquiry, we yet hope to be able to trace its different ramifications and to give an intelligible representation of the present condition of the natives of the Gold Coast.

CHAPTER XII.

Natives of the Gold Coast slaves from birth—Power of the father of a family over its relations—Predilection for marriages with relations—Perfect resignation of the members of a family to bondage—Free people—Process of enslavement through marriage—Native courts and laws—Polygamy—Superstition—Slavery greatly aggravated by famine and the export slave trade—Vassals-slaves, possessors of slaves—Necessity for a protector—Hostility of neighbouring chiefs — Great injustice in the internal government of a tribe—Order in some measure restored by the abolition of the slave trade—Illustration of the system of panyarring—The conquest of Fantee by the Ashantees—Oppressiveness of the Ashantee rule.

We have assumed with some degree of probability that, previous to any intercourse between the nations of Europe and the tribes inhabiting the Gold Coast, something approaching to equality existed among the different members of a tribe; and that a species of patriarchal authority, with an acknowledged superior, was perhaps the only form

of government. We have attempted to describe the effect which their first intercourse with Europeans, and the introduction among them of European commodities, had in causing a more extensive subordination of the ranks of society; how individual labour became associated with the idea of property, and nominal subjection assumed the character of confirmed servitude.

We have shown how trade increased the number of slaves, or rather, perhaps, gave a new character to slavery by making the person of the slave the subject of a distinct compact or bargain, and transferable in exchange for gold or goods; and how, until the introduction of the slave trade, the condition of the individual was little affected by his state of bondage, inasmuch as he continued a member of the same community, and had access to the same limited sphere of enjoyments within the reach of all. Finally, we have taken a general and a rapid glance at the great revolution effected by the introduction of the slave trade.

We will now descend from these generalities, and endeavour to trace a little in detail the peculiar nature of some of the most prominent processes, by which it is seen, that the progress of slavery has been chiefly advanced. In doing this, we will have little occasion to have recourse to ques-

tionable speculation, as the Gold Coast magistrate has, in the cases daily brought before him, ample evidence of the existence of those practices, either in actual operation, or of their having been so within the memory of living witnesses.

The natives of the Gold Coast may emphatically be termed a race of slaves, for, to a certain extent, the condition of slavery is the heritage to which every individual without exception is born. If this assertion should appear too sweeping to those who have observed the little restraints imposed upon the general body of the people, their habitual idleness, and the almost total absence of any kind of labour, it will, nevertheless, be fully acknowledged by those who have looked beyond the surface. These will have observed that the acknowledged head of a family possesses the unquestionable right to dispose of his descendants, and collateral relations, in any way that he may think fit; that they are in fact so much property, which he can sell, pawn, or give away at his pleasure.

We find the members of a family sometimes revolting against the exercise of this authority, where the object aimed at in the disposal of the family property, or, what is the same thing, his slaves and relations, is not the general benefit, but

the particular gratification of its head; nay, there are instances where, from his incompetence, or extravagance, it has been found necessary for the general interest to depose him altogether, and to place another member upon the "family stool." The head of a family must, therefore, be regarded more in the light of the depository and protector of the family interests than of an irresponsible master with unlimited control over his slaves; for there is a wide distinction between a blood-relation and a slave, although, where the interests of the family require it, the right to sell both is undisputed. Indeed, the successful resistance by combination of the members of a family against its natural head is the exception to the general rule, for the actual possessor of the "stool" generally finds means to make his authority felt, and acts according to his pleasure. In this sense it is that every African on the Gold Coast is born liable to the condition of a slave, and only those who have become the heads and representatives of their different families have immunity from this condition. Even an arrival at this dignity is far from being an unfailing protection, for there are frequent instances of native families delivering themselves over to bondage.

It will be seen then that the foundation of one

of the forms of slavery in this country lies very deep; but in this respect, we are not aware that they differ from other primitive races of men. The same undisputed authority and right of disposal were exercised by the patriarchs over their families and household. We are to look for a solution of this circumstance in the idea of possession, or the clear right of property, which, in such a state of society, the parent has in his offspring, and for the foundation of this right in the nature of the marriage-tie. This may simply be defined purchasing a wife; for whatever be the forms and ceremonies connected with this union, it in reality, in the early stages of society, amounts to this.

We need only refer to the contract of Laban with Jacob as a proof of this, and of the answer of Rachel and Leah to their husband, when he signified to them his intention of returning to his own country: "Is there any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house? Are we not counted of him strangers? for he hath sold us." Such we consider a just representation of the nature of marriages upon the Gold Coast; and this answer of the wives of Jacob conveys to us an impression of another similarity of the social condition of the Gold Coast with that of the patri-

archal age. "Is there any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house?" This surely implies that it was customary to regard the possessions of a house as a common family fund, in which all the members of the family, while they remained such, had a share; at the same time, that the head or representative of the family had the direction and disposal of it—such a species of possession, in fact, as passes in Africa under the name of "family property."

To this idea of an actual property in one's descendants is to be attributed the strong predilection, which we have before remarked as being very observable, for family intermarriages. It is evident that this practice, in former days, had been carried to as great an extent as the proportions of the sexes within a sufficient distant degree of relationship would admit; and where it was necessary to seek an alliance beyond the limits of relationship, care was taken to form it in such a manner as would increase the number of family adherents and dependants.

The father, for instance, purchased a wife for his son, and thus preserved for himself the authority of a master as well as the respect of a progenitor over their offspring; while he united his daughter, failing any suitable collateral relation, to

a favourite slave, perhaps, or allowed her to cohabit with an adopted son or friend, upon conditions which secured to him an addition to the consequence of his house in their children; for, except an actual sale of the female takes place, these are emphatically considered as belonging not to their father's family, but, with some trifling observances due to him, entirely subject to the authority and disposal of the head of the mother's relations. We thus see that even where the husband does not purchase his wife, the condition of the offspring is not improved. The only difference is, that in one case they are the born slaves of the father's family, in the other, of the mother's.

To such as have seen the perfect footing of equality which exists in a family, where a deference for age forms the only apparent token of distinction, and who have observed the general freedom of action allowed to all, this may appear a harsh term; but it has not been adopted unadvisedly, for the system which it characterises is no antiquated and nominal custom which has fallen into disuse, but one which is yearly consigning thousands to actual bondage.

The only circumstance connected with this practice which gives any mitigation to the feelings with which we are inclined to regard it, is the

absence of any idea of oppression or of resistance to their lot in the minds of its victims. These, where the interests of the family are at stake, frequently come voluntarily and cheerfully forward, and offer themselves a willing sacrifice to the necessities of their relations, and they pass the remainder of their lives at a distance from them, without an idea or an attempt to evade the service of their master until a redemption price has been paid for them in due form.

When an occasion occurs where a family is obliged to have recourse to sell or to pawn one of its members, it is gone about with all necessary deliberation. A general council of the household is held, the nature of the claim upon the family stated, their available resources reckoned, and the necessity for the step which they are about to take made manifest to all, and recommended, perhaps, by one who volunteers his own person for the common good.

Whatever may be our opinion of such a state of society, where a man's flesh and blood form the staple currency of a country, we can scarcely withhold our admiration from such instances of devoted resignation, where every selfish feeling is made to give place to the general interest. If we should feel disposed to attribute this compliance to insen-

sibility, which may frequently be the case where the obedience is altogether passive, we must nevertheless, acknowledge the existence of generous motives, where the sacrifice is freely and even eagerly tendered; and instances are by no means rare of individuals surrendering themselves vicariously to stripes, imprisonment, and bondage.

But notwithstanding the perfect subservience of every individual member of a family to family necessities, and to the entire disposal of its head, their condition, until this necessity arises, is by no means one of slavery; and they are, therefore, distinguished from the other dependants on the head of the family by the designation of "free people." Although, then, we have considered the marketable use to which every head of a family may apply his blood-relations sufficient to justify us in regarding them as slaves, we, nevertheless, are inclined, upon farther reflection, to retract this opinion, and to agree to their own term of "free people" being applied to such as never have served a master out of their own family; but our reason for doing so, is not likely to convey to the reader an impression of very great immunity. It is upon the principle that, while one has sufficient money in his purse he has no recourse upon his strong box. If the head of a family has resources to

meet all the claims upon himself and his relations, without consigning any of these to bondage, then the curse of slavery may be said not to have come near them. That there are a few such families, we are well aware; but with such a frail protection on the part of the members of a family in a country where might has hitherto been right, and where common debt, the slave trade, war and famine have all in turn demanded their victims, the chance of immunity is very small.

We have here enumerated the causes which have converted a nominal servitude into actual bondage, and have scattered the different members of a family in every direction without a chance of their being any more united under one head. A short consideration of the operation of these causes, as we find them to have been exhibited, with a glance at their general result upon the present aspect and formation of society, will now engage our notice.

It has been seen, that the nature of the marriage-tie is the foundation of the family bondage which we have been considering. Hitherto we have confined ourselves chiefly to the consideration of those original and primitive marriages which consist simply in the purchase of a wife, who becomes the slave of her husband, and the mother of chil-

dren, his slaves also. But in process of time, as different families began to congregate together in greater numbers, a new species of marriage sprung up, where the freedom of the wife and children was not sacrificed to the husband, although, as we have stated above, they were not released from bondage to their own relations. Marriages of this description are effected by the payment of a small sum in the name of dowry to the bride's family, and are become now a far more respectable species of connection than that which had originally existed between master and slave. But we often find that this marriage custom has been made a ready instrument in bringing about the perpetual bondage of the wife and her children to the husband and his family. If misfortunes of any description overtake the wife's relations, and lead them into expenses which they have not the means of paying, who so fit to come to their assistance as her own husband? They apply to him in vain, however, unless they are prepared to give him security for his loan. He will, perhaps, agree to advance a small sum for their necessities, and add it to the amount of his wife's dowry-money, which has always to be returned to the husband or his relations at the death of his wife or her separation from him.

Regardless of a day of reckoning, however, provided they obtain a supply for their present necessities, they readily assent to an arrangement of this description, receive the additional amount upon the security of their daughter, and are full of thanks and gratitude to her husband, who now begins to tyrannize a little more over his wife, seeing that she is getting more deeply involved in his meshes. Upon the next application for a new loan, the husband is more difficult to deal with. He considers that he has already advanced enough upon the security of one pawn, (for his wife may now be considered pawned to him for the amount advanced as dowry-money, and the additional loan,) and will not open his purse to relieve them unless they give him another pawn. They then most probably ask him to advance the new sum required upon the security of one, two, or more of his own children, begotten of his wife, their relation; and he yields to their importunities upon this security.

His wife and children are now his pawns, and cannot be redeemed from him unless upon the payment of all the sums advanced to their relations, with fifty per cent additional for interest of money, which, considering their poverty, is tantamount to perpetual bondage: and indeed, it is very possible that upon the next application the coping-stone is

put to this process of enslaving, by converting the pawn-bond of the wife and children into a distinct sale, attested by all the formalities usual on such occasions.

If the husband be a rich man, there is nothing to prevent him from having as many processes of the same description going on at the same time as his means will allow; for there is no limit to the number of his wives, and where he does not himself care to marry the girls offered to him in pawn, he can always find a use for them for wives to his dependants. As wealth in slaves and pawns has always been considered the most desirable species of riches, the natives of the Gold Coast have left no means untried by which they could compass their object; and have been no less unscrupulous and adroit in acquiring them, than ingenious in devising such laws and regulations for their conduct, as would most durably rivet their bonds, and render their restoration to freedom an impossibility.

The most legitimate means to obtain slaves which we find to have been adopted, are certainly those where a money value has been given for them; but if we were to inquire into the object for which the money had been borrowed, which had cost the bondage of one or more individuals, or to

trace the whole of the usurious process by which a trifling sum has been swollen into a heavy debt, beyond the power of the debtor to liquidate, except by the unconditional surrender of the persons whom he has placed in pawn, we would see good reason to class this process of pawning, as being under the cloak of fair-dealing, one of the most iniquitous schemes ever invented for the purposes of slavery. As it holds out, however, the possibility of the redemption, at some future period, of the persons pawned, it is preferred to an actual sale, which is very rarely had recourse to in the first instance. It thus affords a species of salve for the conscience of the pawner, who "lays the flattering unction to his soul" that he has only subjected the pawnee to a temporary bondage, from which he proposes to redeem him when his affairs are in a more flourishing condition. And if he cannot impose upon himself with this delusive reasoning, he may perhaps be able to stifle with it the anguish of a mother whom he is robbing of her children.

It would be impossible to advert to all the different occasions of man-selling and man-pawning; for where human beings form the staple currency of a country, these occasions will be as various as our necessities; but where the mildness of the climate and the great bounty of nature limit these

within a narrow compass, the operation of the system will be found to exhibit itself chiefly in a few forms peculiar to the circumstances of the people.

The corrupt and extortionate practices of the native tribunals have already been mentioned as one of the most fruitful sources of slavery, even when considered apart from their decisions; but when we take into account, that crimes, offences, and misdemeanors of every description, are punishable entirely by fine, except in cases of actual murder, we trace an extraordinary amount of the slavery of the natives of the Gold Coast to the palaver-mongers, and the covetous spirit of their laws. Polygamy is also made very instrumental for the same purpose, especially among the wealthier part of the community. It is customary for these to keep a number of women, whom they call their wives, among whom are included pawns and slaves, as well as the free women, for whom dowry-money has been paid, and who are in consequence, to be considered the most legitimate wives. But as far as answering the purpose of establishing a charge of adultery, the pawns and slaves are as serviceable as the most legally-married woman in Christendom.

Indeed, it is notorious that many of these

women are maintained for the express purpose of ensnaring the unsuspecting with their blandishments, and carry on their infamous trade with the connivance of their husbands, who frequently bestow upon them a portion of the fine or damages imposed, as a reward for their successful enterprize, and an encouragement for future infidelity. These harpies being very industrious in their vocation, and being ably seconded by the ungovernable passions of men living in a state of nature, consign a numerous body of victims to bondage.

Superstition, and the tricks and impostures of the priests, or Fetishmen, contribute also their quota of slaves. The numerous and expensive observances which these prescribe to be observed, with the view of avoiding or alleviating some calamity, often oblige the applicant for priestly comfort to part with one half of his family, to secure a blessing for the other.

Even death, which might be supposed calculated to terminate the family responsibility, becomes an active enslaver, on account of the expensive obsequies which it is considered the chief point of honour to perform.

These, then, may be regarded as the most ordinary, and, according to the ideas of the natives themselves, the most natural and legitimate

sources of debt, or, what is synonymous with it, slavery; and these, under whatever modifications of circumstances, are unceasingly at work. But, while the marriage contract, crime, corrupt laws and judges, polygamy, superstition and the obsequies of the dead, would, under the most favourable system of government which we can imagine consistent with the ideas of a just native ruler, create a continual fluctuation in the relative position of the individual members of society, gradually tending, like the accumulation of wealth in the hands of capitalists in a commercial community, to the subjection of the many to the few; yet the progress of slavery in a social system of this description would be slow, and its hardships light, in comparison with the impetus and exacerbation given to it, under the influence of famine, war, the slave trade, and general lawlessness. Consequently, we find the condition of the Gold Coast, which has been notoriously subject to these dark elements, labouring under an accumulation of moral, social, political, and physical disease, which gives to it the appearance of a mighty wreck, struggling for existence, and straining to save, to strengthen, and unite its disjointed members. The tempest has indeed passed, but has left behind it such evidence of its destructive power, as

time alone and the healing influences of peace and good government can entirely remove. It is scarcely necessary to advert to the peculiar operation of each and all of those causes, and it would be impossible to enumerate the endless varieties of the origin of slavery to which they have given rise. It will be sufficient to glance at their general effects.

To years of scarcity and famine (which, as far as can be judged from the extreme fertility of the soil, must be, in a great measure, owing to the natural improvidence of the people) we have a different species of bondage, from that consequent upon an ordinary purchase. Families pressed with hunger have thrown themselves at the feet of the rich, and purchased some relief from their misery at the expense of their freedom. If they have fallen into the hands of a bad, unscrupulous man, he has not hesitated to take advantage of their necessities, and to make money of them by a new sale; but as the chief ambition of the African is to be surrounded by a numerous train of slaves and dependants, it will more generally be found to have been the case that, even in times of great necessity, the rich man has stinted himself, and endeavoured to starve out a famine, surrounded by famishing dependants, trusting, in the return of a

season of plenty, to be rewarded for his abstinence by the display of an imposing retinue. Those to whom he has imparted this scanty relief are henceforth in reality his slaves, although he does not offend them by calling them so. He adopts them as a portion of his family, treats them with the same regard as his blood-relations, and will not sell or pawn them, except upon occasions of such pressing emergency as would warrant him in acting in the same manner towards his own relations. With these they intermarry, and finally, all distinction of their extraction is lost.

This rich man's household may now probably consist—1stly, of blood relations; 2ndly, of slaves bought with a money-price; and 3rdly, of dependants, who have thrown themselves upon him for protection. In order to trace still farther the natural formation of society on the Gold Coast, we shall imagine this rich man, whom we have seen adding to the number of his adherents, the victims of hunger, arrived at the consequence of a petty chieftain, living in a village entirely composed of his own dependants. He is threatened with the hostility of a neighbouring chief, whose power he dreads, but to whom, from the equality of their rank, or from motives of particular dislike, he is unwilling to submit. He, therefore, seeks the pro-

tection of some powerful chief; in return for which he becomes his vassal, and without being degraded to the condition of a slave, pays him such homage and service as the feudal barons of Europe in the middle ages rendered to their liege lords. This he does without at all impairing his rights over his own slaves and dependants, who owe obedience to him alone, and pay service to the superior only in consequence of their duty to their own immediate master. He accompanies his superior to war, swells his train with his retainers on all occasions of ceremony, visits him with presents at his annual customs, and exchanges with him mutual assurances of allegiance and protection.

In the same manner as he prospers under the shadow of his superior's power, a gradation of rank takes place among his own dependants, who enjoy considerable privileges, and are permitted to acquire slaves of their own. In a state of society which does not admit of isolation, but where men are obliged to congregate together for mutual safety, freedom and independence of action are altogether unknown. Such communities, too, especially when the spirit of gain has once been aroused, live, for the most part, in a state of continual warfare with their neighbours. When,

therefore, we reflect upon the stimulus given to this spirit by the introduction of the slave trade, we at once perceive the utter impossibility of any security to the individual who has no protector. There is, in fact, no place for such a character at all. He is laid hold of wherever he may be, and appropriated by the finder with much less ceremony than an honest man would think of using, in reference to any trifle which he might pick up in his path.

During the continuance of the slave trade, which added tenfold to the general lawlessness of men, opportunities of disposing of such stray waifs as the solitary traveller, the hunter, who had wandered too far from his home, the labourer in his plantation, and the water-carrier returning from the distant pond, were so frequent and attended with so little chance of detection (where fear, for the most part, detained every one within the limits of a small circle of friendly intercourse), that it was certain slavery to venture beyond these short precincts without sufficient numbers to maintain their freedom. This insecurity confined them within narrow limits, and rendered their knowledge of surrounding tribes, and of their relative geographical position, incorrect and circumscribed; for even the tie of a common superior was altogether insufficient to preserve

anything like mutual good-will and forbearance between rival vassals and their retainers. The natural result of this spirit was to maintain the whole of the petty chiefs of the country in an attitude of armed hostility, ready at any moment to take advantage of the first favourable opportunity of taking captive and enslaving each other's dependants. If policy sometimes forced upon them the necessity of forming for a time friendly alliances, these were, for the most part, nothing but a hollow truce, which could not withstand any strong temptation of a present advantage which its breach might expose to them. These temporary leagues, which invariably ended in one party becoming the dupe of the other, often even to the extent of the enslavement of a whole tribe, being productive of no permanent good, resulted in a return to the same hostile attitude which had existed previous to their formation.

Being thus debarred, by what may be termed a species of political isolation, from any permanent, friendly, or commercial intercourse, and their supply of slaves for traffic derived from beyond the boundaries of each town being limited to the doubtful success of an occasional foray, the avaricious spirit which had been evoked was compelled to seek for its prey at home. Hence sprung

those cruel acts of wanton injustice which have characterised the internal government of every tribe upon the Gold Coast, and which at one time or other have turned each man's hand against his neighbour, notwithstanding the bond of brotherhood, which the ties of blood and dependance might be supposed to create. Pretexts the most shallow, injuries the most imaginary, crimes that never had existence, have been assigned as reasons for the subjugation of the weak, and their consequent sale and exportation.

Brute force entirely usurped the place of reason, and familiarity with human suffering destroyed every seed of sensibility. The powerful, in the wantonness of their strength, have answered appeals to their mercy with cruel and biting mockery; and when the bereaved mother has wept for the children which have been torn from her, and "would not be comforted because they were not," she has been scoffingly told to seek redress from the hawk soaring in the heavens, or to look for her offspring in the belly of a fish.

When the cessation of the export slave trade, by cutting off one of the sources of the profits of man-stealing, and lessening in proportion the avidity of the pursuit, had occasioned increased security, and opened a freer communication through-

out the country, it was found less difficult for neighbouring chiefs to maintain those peaceable relations with each other, which were necessary to the very existence of a more legitimate traffic. Self-interest which, among heathens, is not the least sensitive test of conscience, often counselled restraint and self-denial, when opportunity and covetousness urged to an opposite course; but where the arm of justice was powerless, and the temptation to seize a present advantage strong, this principle formed but a poor safeguard against injustice. We accordingly find that frequent interruptions, more or less serious, have been continually occurring to divert the new traffic from channels which had become unsafe owing to some act of pure lawlessness, or to the spirit of a wild redress of wrongs, and the peculiar modes of its manifestation.

This wild redress to which we refer, naturally arose out of the difficulty of communication, and the total impossibility of obtaining redress of injuries from those living at a distance. To obviate this difficulty, a species of blind retaliation was had recourse to, which complicated in an extraordinary degree the web of injustice, and rendered its final disentanglement altogether uncertain.

It is impossible to convey a just idea of this

system without having recourse to illustration. We shall, therefore, suppose A. of Cape Coast to have some claim upon B. of Accra, which he finds it impossible to adjust, on account of the great distance, or the disturbed state of the country, which makes the paths unsafe. He, therefore, watches for the first favourable opportunity, and as soon as he learns that any Accra person is in Cape Coast, or in its vicinity, he lays hold of him, and detains him "upon A.'s head," as they express it—that is, he has no intention to part with him, until he has received satisfaction from B.

The relations of the person seized, as soon as they are acquainted with the fact, have recourse upon the family of B., and compel them to satisfy A.'s demand, and stand accountable to them for the restitution of their relation.

When the country is tolerably quiet, and communication comparatively safe, the evils of such a system, though great, are still—putting aside the temporary inconvenience—in some measure remediable; but where general lawlessness prevails, this blind retaliation is carried to such an extent, that it is neither confined to persons of the same tribe or town with the offending party, nor at all measured by the extent of the injury.

So much is this the case, that to carry out the

illustration the whole letters of the alphabet would not suffice to represent the number of different persons implicated in B.'s refusal, or delaying of justice to A. Such a complicated series of injustice renders it frequently impossible to trace the effect to its original cause. Here and there we may fall upon a few consecutive links of the chain, and may see how to adjust them, as far as they are concerned; but when we arrive at the primary link of this fragment, we are constrained to acknowledge that it forms only a tangible point in a series, of which some portion of the connection is lost, but which mounts up to an origin which cannot be traced out.

The observation of such a state of society as is here described, led to the remark, with which we set out, that "Physical strength is the foundation of all power in a barbarous state of society, and injustice the foundation of all property." And as far, at least, as property in slaves in this country is concerned, there can, we think, be no doubt of the truth of the position.

The total impossibility of obtaining redress has left thousands of the creatures, thus unjustly seized for no delinquency of their own, in a state of incurable bondage, which has descended as their only legacy to their posterity. This system of

"panyarring" then, as it is termed, which, under certain circumstances, is unavoidable and necessary, and little different, when not carried to abuse, to the embargoes of European governments, becomes, among a people devoid of stringent laws, a flimsy pretext for robbery and oppression.

It might be imagined that we had already adverted to discordant elements sufficient to disjoint the whole frame-work of society, since they induce us to compare the bulk of the population at the time to which we refer to the condition of cattle in a pastoral country, in as far as a frequent change of owners and locality, and a disregard of the natural ties are concerned; with this difference in favour of the brute creation, that, inasmuch as they are peaceably transferred from one possessor to another, the unfortunate African passes often through scenes of great cruelty and bloodshed to his new master. But the coping-stone is yet wanting to complete the social edifice on the Gold Coast, or rather, perhaps, we should say, the last mine remains to be sprung to shatter it to its very foundation, and to leave it in the shapeless mass of ruins in which we find it at the close of the war with Ashantee.

It would be difficult to imagine a people so numerically strong as the tribes of the Gold Coast

were, before their invasion by the Ashantees, so essentially weak and incapable of defence. Without any common rallying point, often at feud with each other, and suspicious and distrustful even at the best of times, they could ill withstand a powerful and united people, moved by a single will, and more afraid of the displeasure of their king than of ten thousand enemies.

The weak and disunited tribes of Fantee fell an easy prey to such invaders. In fact, their wisest policy consisted in an abject submission to their enemies, from whom escape was impossible; and although their tender mercies were not much to be relied on, their best hope lay in anticipating and preventing the fierceness of their anger by a timely acknowledgment of their inferiority and dependence. It fared worst with the weakest families who trusted in themselves, and sought the mediation of no protector; such isolated creatures being considered unworthy of the king's regard, and becoming in consequence the prey of their immediate captors.

The knowledge of this circumstance induced families and petty chiefs so situated to seek the protection of the more powerful chiefs, for which they bartered their freedom and independence. These accessions of dependants greatly increased their consequence, and enabled them to give to

their submission an imposing effect, which exercised a potent influence over their fate. It tended more to the dignity of the Ashantee nation, and gratified in a higher degree the lust of power and conquest in the king to receive such chiefs as his vassals, than to depopulate the country, and absorb the remnant spared from his wrath into the general Ashantee population. But under the most favourable circumstances, the conquest of such an extensive country by a proud and relentless enemy becomes a visitation of the most awful description to its inhabitants. The fearful and sublime predictions of Scripture, in reference to the destruction of the Jewish nation, are not overcharged pictures of the condition of the natives of the Gold Coast, labouring under a similar calamity.

The policy of the conquerors, however, induced them to prefer forming the conquered tribes into royal preserves for future plunder, to their entire extinction at one fell massacre, or to their indiscriminate captivity. Having glutted their fury upon their enemies, and avenged the hardships of a campaign attended with famine by numerous acts of wanton butchery, and having made a selection of victims to be sacrificed to their gods, on their return to their capital, as well as of slaves to serve them in their own country, the desolating

hordes withdrew, to celebrate their conquest at Coomassie, and left behind them a scene of desolation which the feeling heart shudders to contemplate.

It was no part of the Ashantee policy, however, to alter the government of the conquered country. The chiefs of the different tribes remained in possession of what power the conqueror thought fit to leave them, with the style and rank of a captain of the king; and in that capacity they acted as so many lieutenants, governing the country in the king's name, at the same time that they continued to receive the allegiance and service of their own vassals and slaves.

But the king was not content to leave the government entirely in the hands of the native chiefs, who might possibly in the course of time rally the prostrate energies of the country, and combine to throw off his yoke. In consequence of this suspicion, which ever haunts the minds of usurpers, he appointed pro-consuls of the Ashantee race, men of trust and confidence, to reside with the fallen chiefs, to notify to them the royal will, to exercise a general superintendence over them, and especially to guard against and to spy out any conspiracies that might be formed to recover their independence.

Although no acknowledged rule of taxation was established, yet a systematic course of oppression and spoliation was practised by the king's officers, which enabled him to draw a considerable revenue from the conquered country. This revenue, as happens generally among a people little advanced in the science of political economy, was chiefly derived from fines and confiscations; and as the king's favour to his officers was measured by the amount of their levies, it will be readily conceived that his approbation, and not the dictates of justice, became their standard of action. But the king's dues were not the only impositions which the Gold Coast tribes had to endure. Not even the terrors of a despot can root the principle of selfishness from the human breast. His officers, the native chiefs, their vassals, and their dependants of every degree above the common slave, had all ends of their own to compass, which could only be accomplished by the superior preying upon the inferior classes.

It was the object of the king's officers to encourage a litigious spirit among the tribes of the Gold Coast, as the contentions and strifes of the palaver-mongers were a principal source of emolument; and when the fierce passions of savage men did not afford sufficient scope for the exercise of

oppression, pretexts of disrespect to the king's authority, or of taking his name in vain, were always had recourse to, to fill up the measure of their sufferings. As riches among the native chiefs and people were inconsistent with a continuance of the king's authority, no pains were spared to grind them to the extreme of poverty. To such an extent were these oppressions carried, that the powers of human endurance could no longer bear it, and hopeless as the attempt was, they endeavoured to throw off the yoke. But unsupported as they were with the sinews of war, and uncemented by any close bond of alliance, they could offer no effectual resistance to the king's power, which they were made to feel with tenfold severity. The weak and hopeless struggle, the tyrannical exactions of the conquerors, the outrages committed upon the English flag, which roused the government to bring their tardy succour to the Fantees, the alternations of defeat and success, and the final recovery of their independence, have been already narrated, and do not require to be enlarged upon. Our present purpose is to point out the effect of the subjugation of the country, and of the Ashantee supremacy, upon the social condition of the people.

This may be described as manifested, generally,

in a more extensive domination of the principal chiefs, and a consequent diffusion of slavery. There became fewer masters and more slaves, many of those who had before been able to maintain something like independence being constrained, from motives of self-preservation, to barter their freedom for the doubtful protection of a chief; which, without securing them at all times from the fate which they most dreaded—that of being carried away into Ashantee—served effectually to consign them to bondage at home.

The cruel exactions of the oppressors made it often difficult for the chiefs themselves to maintain their position, and not a few of them were so impoverished, that they sank to the condition of slaves. Others, to meet the extortionate demands made upon them, having exhausted all their gold, had nothing to offer but the unfortunate wretches who had united themselves to them as their only hope of escape from foreign bondage, as any fate was preferable to that which awaited them at Coomassie; and as the Ashantees preferred money to slaves, it became customary for these victims of a cruel oppression to go from house to house, offering themselves for slaves to any one that would satisfy the demand made upon them by the Ashantees.

They thus proceeded on their journey to Coomassie, attempting to hawk themselves in every town through which they passed. A brother might find a master in one town, a sister in another, a mother in a third, and so on; the anguish of a separation giving place to the terrors of being sacrificed at Coomassie. The residence of the Ashantee pro-consuls in the towns upon the Gold Coast, afforded them opportunities of becoming intimately acquainted with the condition of the people, and enabled them to apportion their exactions to their possessions, and to select their victims.

Such a system, where human beings are circulated from hand to hand with all the indifference of a common currency, struck at the root of every domestic and social relation; and the drain upon the population consequent upon this incessant deportation, must have soon ended in the extermination or absorption of the whole race, except for the protection which the government was able to extend to them. It was not like a trade, where the benefits are reciprocal, and where the consumption is counterbalanced by a proportionate supply. Here there was nothing but a continual process of exhaustion occasioned by spoliation of the worst description. It was no wonder then,

that the Fantees became aware, that their very existence as a people was incompatible with Ashantee supremacy, and that even they were aroused to throw off the yoke.

The imagination of the reader, after the account which has been given of the dark elements which have in turn brooded over and poisoned the social atmosphere of the Gold Coast, will have little difficulty in picturing the exhausted and disorganized condition of the people at the close of the war. As our representation, however, would be incomplete without tracing the effects of the abolition of the export slave trade, the extension of legitimate commerce, the fruits of peace, of consequent security, and comparative good government, we will endeavour to extend the view to the present time.

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Amongst the prominent subjects traced to their springs and followed to their final issues in this work will be found the great struggle that took place, towards the latter part of the last century, between the Crown and the Parliament; the administration of Lord North, the formation of the Coalition Ministry, and the breaking-up of the Whig party; the King's first illness, and the contest on the Regency question; the French Revolution, and the War against France; the Irish Rebellion of 1798; and the Legislative Union between Great Britain and Ireland, &c. There is scarcely a single individual of celebrity throughout the period from 1782 to 1800 who is not introduced into these pages. Amongst others, besides the King and the various members of the Royal Family, are Rockingham, Shelburne, North, Thurlow, Loughborough, Fox, Pitt, Sheridan, Burke, Portland, Sydney, Fitzwilliam, Tierney, Buckingham, Grenville, Grey, Malmesbury, Wilberforce, Burdett, Fitzgibbon, Grattan, Flood, Cornwallis, the Beresfords, the Ponsonbys, the Wellesleys, &c.

"A very remarkable and valuable publication. The Duke of Buckingham has himself undertaken the task of forming a history from the papers of his grandfather and great-uncle, the Earl Temple (first Marquis of Buckingham), and Lord Grenville, of the days of the second Wm. Pitt. The letters which are given to the public in these volumes, extend over an interval commencing with 1782, and ending with 1800. In that interval events occurred which can never lose their interest as incidents in the history of England. The Coalition Ministry and its dismissal by the King—the resistance of the Sovereign and Pitt to the efforts of the discarded ministers to force themselves again into office—the great constitutional question of the Regency which arose upon the King's disastrous malady—the contest upon that question between the heir apparent and the ministers of the Crown—the breaking out of the French Revolution, and the consequent entrance of England upon the great European war,—these, with the union with Ireland, are political movements every detail of which possesses the deepest interest. In these volumes, details, then guarded with the most anxious care from all eyes but those of the privileged few, are now for the first time given to the public. The most secret history of many of the transactions is laid bare. It is not possible to conceive contemporary history more completely exemplified. From such materials it was not possible to form a work that would not possess the very highest interest. The Duke of Buckingham has, however, moulded his materials with no ordinary ability and skill. The connecting narrative is written both with judgment and vigour—not unfrequently in a style that comes up to the highest order of historical composition—especially in some of the sketches of personal character."—*Morning Herald.*

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